THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

A Treatise,
Vnfolding the whole Duty of PRAYER.
Delivered in five SERMONS, upon 1 *Thess.* 5. 17.

By the late Faithfull and Worthy *Minister of* IESVS CHRIST,
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The Ninth Edition, Corrected.

The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Iames 5. 16.
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare my Prayer, Psal. 66. 18.

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To the Reader.

Courteous Reader.

TO diſcourſe largely of the neceſſity and uſe of this piece of ſpirituall armour, after ſo many learned and uſefull Treatiſes upon this ſubject, may ſeeme ſuperfluous, eſpecially conſidering that there is much ſpoken to this purpoſe, for thy ſatisfaction, in the inſuing Treatiſe; wherein beſides the unfolding of the nature of this dutie (which is The Saints daily Exercise) and ſtrong inforcement to it, there is an endeavour to give ſatisfaction in the moſt incident caſes, want of clearing whereof is uſually an hindrance to the cheerefull, and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath beene done by this Reverend and worthy man, we had rather ſhould appeare in the Treatiſe it ſelfe, to thy indifferent judgement, than to be much in ſetting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reaſon of the ſpirituall, and convincing maner of handling this argument, it will win acceptance with many, eſpecially conſidering, that it is of that nature, wherin, though much have beene ſpoken, yet much more may be ſaid with good reliſh to thoſe that have any ſpirituall ſenſe: for it is the moſt ſpirituall action, wherein wee have neerer communion with God, than in any other holy performance, and whereby it pleaſeth God to conveigh all good to us, to the performance whereof Chriſtians find moſt backwardneſſe, and indiſpoſednеſſe, and from thence moſt dejection of ſpirit; which alſo in theſe times is moſt neceſſarie, wherein

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unleſſe we fetch helpe from Heaven, this way we ſee the Church, and Cauſe of God like to bee trampled under feet. Onely remember that wee let theſe Sermons paſſe forth as they were delivered by himſelfe, in publik, without taking that liberty of adding or detracting, which, perhaps ſome would have thought meete: for wee thought it beſt that his owne meaning ſhould be expreſſed in his owne words and manner, eſpecially conſidering there is little, which perhaps may ſeeme ſuperfluous to ſome, but may, by Gods bleſſing, bee uſefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniencies in this kind, if able men would be perſwaded to publiſh their owne Works in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good ſervice to the Church, when that defect is ſupplyed by giving ſome life to thoſe things, which otherwiſe would have dyed of themſelves. The bleſſing of theſe Labours of his we commend unto God, and the benefit of them unto thee, reſting,

Thine in our Lord Ieſus Chriſt,

RICHARD SIBBS.

IOHN DAVENPORT.

THE

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THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

The first Sermon.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THe Apoſtle here, in the latter end of this Epiſtle, heapes up many precepts together, and therefore wee ſhall not need to ſeeke out the dependance of theſe words from thoſe that go before, or thoſe that follow after. *Rejoyce evermore*, (ſaith he;) *Pray continually, In all things*

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give thankes: for this is the will of God in Christ Iesus to you-wards.

We are now fallen upon this Text, where this duty of prayer is commended to us, and it is a command from *God* himselfe delivered shortly, as lawes are wont to be, without any great premises and reasons, and indeed, hath therefore the more authority in it.

Pray continually.

3 Things considerable, for opening of the words.

IN the handling of which, wee will doe these three things:

First we will shew you what *Prayer* is.

Secondly, why the *Lord* requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the *Lord* knowes my wants well enough, hee knowes my minde and how I am affected? I, but yet the *Lord* will have us to *pray*, and to aske before he will bestow it upon us.

And lastly, what it is to *pray continually*.

1. what prayer is.
1 In generall.

For the first, if wee would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would give you no more but this description of it, *It is an expression of the minde to the Lord*: sometimes by words, sometimes without words, but yet there must be an expression, and some opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

2 In speciall.

But now to know what a right *prayer* is, what such a *prayer* is, as *God* accepts; you must have another definition which must have more ingredients into it, and so, *Prayer is* (nothing else but) *an expression or offering of those holy, and good dispositions*

ons to God, that ariſe from the Spirit, or the regenerate part, in the Name of Ieſus Chriſt. Where you are to obſerve this; That the *prayers* which wee make, are divided into one of theſe two ſorts:

Diviſion of prayers into two ſorts.

1

Such as come from our owne ſpirits.

Firſt, ſome are ſuch *prayers* as are the expreſſions of our owne ſpirits, the voyce of our owne ſpirits, and there is nothing but fleſh in them; ſuch prayers any naturall man may make to the *Lord:* And theſe the *Lord* regards not, he knowes not the meaning of them, that is, he doth not accept them.

Note.

2

Such as come from Gods Spirit.

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voice of *Gods* owne Spirit, that is, ſuch as ariſe from the regenerate part that is within us, which is quickned and enlarged to pray from the immediate helpe of the *Holy Ghoſt*; theſe prayers are onely accepted, and of theſe it is ſaid, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit*: that is, he ſo knowes it, and ſees it, that alſo he accepts it. Therefore you ſhall ſee in *Hoſea* 7. 14. when they prayed, and prayed earneſtly, yea, not only ſet a day apart for prayer, but alſo called a ſolemne Aſſembly, and kept a faſt, yet, ſaith the *Lord* plainely, *Yee did not call upon mee when you howled upon your beds*; *for* (ſaith he) *you aſſembled your ſelves for Corne, and for Wine*; which any naturall man may doe: And therefore (ſaith he) it is but an *howling*; it is as the voyce of beaſts, to ſeeke for wine, and oyle, and corne; but no prayer, for he ſaith plainely, *You called not upon me*, when notwithſtanding, they ſpent a whole day in prayer. The meaning is, that the *Lord* regards this as no prayer at all.

Rom. 8. 27.

Hoſea 7. 14.

Prayers of wicked men howlings.

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The termes of the description opened.

And therefore to open a little this description unto you; (for it is one maine businesse that we have to doe, in handling of this Text, to describe to you the meaning of this precept, What the nature of *prayer* is;) that you may know what kind of *prayer* it is, that prevailes with *God*. I say, *It is an expression of holy and good dispositions*. I use that expression rather of *dispositions*, than *desires*,

1 Why hee useth the word (*dispositions*) rather than desires.

because there is some part of *prayer* that stands in thankesgiving, when you desire nothing at *Gods* hands, but give thankes for that you have received; marke, first, that they must be *holy* and *good*,

When the desires and dispositions of men are good.

the desires and dispositions must bee good: for that is a rule, *All the affections and desires are good, or evill, according as their Objects are*; those that are fixed upon good things, are good desires.

Quest.

You will say then, what are the good things that make the desires and dispositions of the heart good?

Answ. That temporal things may be desired in a carnall manner, and carnall things in a spirituall manner and how.

They are temporall things, and spirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a spirituall manner, and the desire may be good; and againe, he may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, and the desire may bee naught. Therefore that must be observed withall, that it is not simply the object, but there is a certaine manner of desiring too: for example, if a man pray for temporall things, for outward comforts, such things as belong to the present estate of his body here, if he pray for them with these conditions, that hee may have that which is convenient:

ent for him, he prayes for such a measure as God sees to be meet, as *Prov.* 30. *Feed mee with convenient food for mee*; this praier is good. But (*if any man will be rich*, as 1 *Tim.* 6.) it is an inordinate desire, when men will have excesse of these outward things, and more than is fit for them. And again, if you desire that which is *convenient*, and *spend it upon your lusts*, if you desire health, and long life, that you may live more pleasantly, if you desire wealth, that you may live more deliciously, and not simplie that which the creature may desire, and to the end that you may be the more inabled to serve the *Lord* in these things, your desire is not good. So I say, first it must be for that which is *convenient*, secondly, you must not *spend it upon your lusts*, but in *Gods* service.

Prov. 30. 8.

1 *Tim.* 6. 9.

When the desire of outward things is good.

And lastly, wee must pray for them in a right method, *First seeke the Kingdome of God, and then other things*, that is, Chiefely, and in the first place, pray for Spirituall thinges, and then afterwards for Temporall in order unto them. Wee should so pray for temporall things, as our praiers may be spirituall. On the other side, a man may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a spirituall manner. A naturall man may pray earnestly for faith, and for grace, and repentance, not out of any beauty that he sees in them, not out of any taste and relish that hee hath of them, but because hee thinkes them a Bridge to leade him to Heaven, and that he cannot come thither without them: when he considers in his heart that he cannot be

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

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ſaved without theſe things, I ſay, then he may deſire them, and that earneſtly. It was the caſe of *Francis Spira*, who cryed ſo earneſtly for grace, that he might have but a drop of it, becauſe hee could not be ſaved without it; and he gives the reaſon himſelfe, when he ſaid withall, he ſaw no excellencie in it, he deſired it not for it ſelfe, and therefore hee thought his praiers ſhould not bee heard. Thus you ſee that praier is an *expreſſion of holy and good deſires.*

Spira his caſe.

Againe, it is *an offering them up to the Lord:* But I will not ſtand upon that (you are well enough inſtructed in it) that whatſoever petition is made to the creature, is not a prayer, it muſt onely be offered up to the *Lord.*

Theſe deſires muſt be offered to God.

Then I adde, it is an expreſſion of ſuch deſires as muſt *ariſe from the regenerate part*, that is, looke how much there is of the *regenerate part* in a praier, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, looke how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, ſo farre it is ſanctified, ſo far that praier is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we will ſhew you it by ſome other expreſſions of praier, that we finde in the Scriptures.

Ariſing from the ſpirit, or regenerate part.

Prayer is called a *lifting up of the heart to God, a powring forth of the ſoule to the Lord*, 1. *Sam.* 1. 15. *A ſerving of him in ſpirit*, ſo *Paul* calleth it. Now if we open theſe phraſes a little, you ſhall know more fully wherin the nature of right praying to *God* conſiſts. That phraſe the Apoſtle uſeth (*whom I ſerve in my ſpirit*) is the ſame word in the originall

Expreſſions of Prayer in the Scripture.

1 *Sam.* 1. 15.

nal that is used for fasting and praier. Now what is it to pray to *God* in the spirit? for we may say, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his minde goes to it, and every man, what service soever he performes, his spirit must needs have a hand in it, so that it cannot bee performed without the minde.

I take this to be the meaning of it; for the Apostles scope is, to distinguish the true and holy services of *God* from those that are but shadowes and counterfeit, and as it were, but the body and carcasse of right service. Therfore, when he saith, *I serve the Lord in my spirit*, or, *I pray in the spirit*; the meaning is this, the prayer of a man is not onely that which the vnderstanding dictats to him, but when the whole soule, the wil & affections go together with his petition, and whatsoever the petition is; a mans hart is affected accordingly. As for example, If a man come to confesse his sins, & yet slights them inwardly in his hart; if a man pray for reconciliation with *God*, and yet have no longing and sighing in his hart after it; if he earnestly aske grace, and the mortification of sinful lust, when the heart doth not inwardly seeke it, now he prayes not in the *spirit*. To pray in the *spirit* is as that in *Ioh.* 4. 24. *He will bee worshipped in spirit and truth*: the meaning is, so to pray as the hart go together with our petitiō. The same also is the meaning of that when a man poureth forth his soule before the *Lord*: So *Hannah* saith of her self, *I am a woman troubled, &c. and poure out my soule before the Lord*: which is not when a man deli-

To serue God in the spirit, what.

Ioh. 4. 24.

To powre out the ſoule to God, what.

vers to *GOD* that which the underſtanding and mind hath deviſed only, (for prayer is not a work of wit, or of memory) but when a man powreth forth his whole ſoule (that is) his wil and affections, when they goe together, and there is no reſervation in his minde, but all within him is opened and explicate, and expoſed to the view of the *Lord*, not as *Auſtin* ſaith of himſelfe, when hee came to pray for the mortifying of his luſts, ſaith hee, *I had a ſecret inward deſire that it ſhould not bee done.* Therefore when the *Soule is powred foorth*, the meaning is that all muſt bee opened to him; ſo that when a man will make an acceptable praier, hee muſt make this accompt, hee muſt then call in all his thoughts and affections, and recollect them together as the lines in the center, or as the Sun-beames in a burning Glaſſe, and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwiſe it is but a cold and diſſipated thing, that hath no ſtrength or efficacie in it.

Auſtin.

Simile.

Now this with all you muſt know, that when wee ſay the whole ſoule muſt goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will and affections be imployed, (for in a naturall man, in his deſire of health, when heis ſicke, or wanteth aſſiſtance & guidance in difficult caſes, not onely the underſtanding, but the will and affections are buſie enough it is likely) but alſo wee adde further that that which is called the *ſpirit*, and is difficult through the whole ſoule, be ſet on worke alſo in the performance of this holy duty to the *Lord*, whenſoever we ſeeke to him in praier.

Note.

For

For this you muſt know, that there are two things in a regenerate man, (for you muſt take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to God, ſeeing there is no ſpirit in him, but in the regenerate man) there is, I ſay, fleſh and ſpirit: now when we come to poure foorth our hearts to the *Lord*, that which lies uppermoſt, will bee ready to bee poured forth firſt; and that which is ſpirituall, it may be lies in the bottome, and is kept in; ſo that a man may make a carnall prayer, though he bee a holy man; that is, when the fleſh hath gotten the vpper hand, as in ſome fits it may; when the mind is filled with Worldly ſorrow, and Worldly rejoycing, and Worldly deſires, and theſe (lying uppermoſt) will bee ſooneſt expreſſed: ſuch a prayer the *Lord* regards not, though the man be holy, from whence it comes: but right prayer is this; when the regenerate part is acted and ſtirred vp, and the fleſh that alwaies hinders, is removed. For you muſt know this, that whereſoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptnes in that to call upon *God*; and it cannot be diſjoyned from it, but that is not alwaies in act.

Two things in a man regenerate.

No naturall man can make an acceptable prayer.

A holy man may make a carnall praier.

Right prayer, what.

As we ſee a fountain, it hath alwaies an aptnes to poure forth water, it is ready to breake into a current, but if it be ſtopped with ſtones and mud or other impediments, it cannot breake out: ſo he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptneſſe to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour ſaith, *Mat.* 26. 41. *The ſpirit is willing*, that is, there is alwaies a willingneſſe

Simile.

An aptneſſe in the regenerate part to prayer. *Mat.* 26. 41.

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How the ſpirit helpes our infirmities. *Rom.8.27.* *Simile.*

neſſe that followes the ſpirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man, but, ſaith hee, *the fleſh is backward*, that is it that ſtops this fountain, and therefore *Rom.* 8. 27. *The ſpirit* is ſaid there *to helpe our infirmities, and to make our requeſts for us*; that is, even as a man removing ſtones from a fountaine with his hands, makes the Water a paſſage to breake out into a current; ſo the *Holy Ghoſt* removes this fleſh, which ſtops up the current, the *ſpirit* takes away thoſe carnall impediments that are in us: and not onely ſo, but ſtirreth up the regenerate part; and when that is done, wee are able to make a ſpiritual praier unto *God* in *Chriſt Ieſus*; So, that is the thing that you are now to obſerve, that the *Spirit* muſt helpe our infirmities, when we come to call upon GOD, and our praiers be ſo far acceptable as they bee the fruits of the regenerate part; now wee want but one thing added in the definition.

Offered up in the Name of Ieſus Chriſt.

They are ſuch Prayers as are offered to God in the Name of Ieſus Chriſt.

This is a thing that you all know, that thoſe prayers that are not offered up in Chriſt, are not acceptable, becauſe the perſon is not regarded. It was the ſinne of *Vzziah* in 2 *Chron.* 26. He would goe to the Temple himſelfe being a King on the Throne, and he would offer incenſe without a Prieſt. We doe the very ſelfe-ſame thing, whenſoever we goe to offer up any prayer to *God* without *Ieſus Chriſt*. In the old Law men might bring their ſacrifices, but ſtill the Prieſt muſt offer them; ſo muſt we here, and the reaſon is given,

2 *Chron.*26.

ven, *Revel.* 8. becauſe the praiers that come from us ſavour of the fleſh, from which they come: and the Angell of the Covenant *mingleth much incenſe with them*, and makes them ſweet and acceptable to *God*, *with much incenſe*; that is, as the fleſh is more, ſo there needs more incenſe, that they may be made acceptable to *God* the Father. So that we have indeed a double interceſſor; one is, *the Spirit that helpes our infirmities*, that helps us to make our petitions, that quickens and inlargeth our hearts to prayer: The other is the *Interceſſor* to make them acceptable to *God*, that hee may receive them, and not refuſe and reject them. So much ſhall ſerve for the firſt thing, to ſhew you what the duty is, what a right, true, and acceptable prayer is.

Revel. 8. Why we muſt offer our prayers in Chriſts Name.

Interceſſour double.

Now for the ſecond, *why muſt we pray*: For this objection a man may make, the *Lord* knowes my minde well enough, and what needs ſuch an expreſſion of it by praier? The reaſons briefly why the *Lord* will have us to pray, are taken;

2 Why the Lord will haue us to pray, ſeeing he knowes our wants.

Partly from himſelfe.

And partly from us.

1 From himſelfe though he be willing to beſtow mercies upon us, yet he will have us aske his leave before he gives thē. As (you know) fathers do with their children, though they intend to beſtow ſuch things upon them as are needfull, yet they will have their children to aske them; & as it is a cōmon thing among men, though they be willing a man ſhould paſſe thorow their ground yet they will have leave asked, becauſe by that meanes

1 In reſpect of him ſelfe.

Simile.

Simile.

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To acknowledge his property in his gifts.

meanes the property is acknowledged, otherwiſe it would be taken as a common high way; ſo the *Lord* will have his ſervants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property hee hath in thoſe gifts hee beſtowes upon them: Indeed otherwiſe wee would forget by what tenure wee hold thoſe bleſſings wee enjoy, and what ſervice we owe to the *Lord*; as you know there is an homage due to every Lord of a Mannor that he might bee acknowledged of his Tenants; ſo the *Lord* will have this duty of prayer performed, that wee may acknowledge that wee hold all of him, and that wee might remember the ſervice we ought to doe him, to riſe and goe at his command, that is, to doe his ſervice, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accuſtomed to the duty of calling on him.

Simile.

2 To honour him.

Likewiſe he will have it done for his honours ſake, hee will have men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewiſe that others might be ſtirred up to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The ſervants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their Lord, ſtirre up thoſe that are lookers on: and as the Schoolmen ſay of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellency in him, (for that hee may have, and yet bee without glory) but glory is an oſtentation, a ſhewing out of that excellency. It is the phraſe that is uſed in the Sacrament, You ſhall celebrate the Sacrament, that you may *ſhew forth the Lords death*; ſo the *Lord* will have us come and call upon

Simile.

Glory, what.

on his name to shew forth the duty of praier, and that we may shew forth his glory. This is for the *Lord* himselfe.

Now *from our selves*; we are to doe it, partly that the graces of his Spirit may be increased in us: for praier exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in praier, and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in *Iude* 20. *That you may edifie your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost*; as if he should say; the way to edifie your selves, and build up your selves, is to pray in the *Holy Ghost*; that is, by spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the *Holy Ghost*: Every such prayer builds us up, it increaseth every grace in us; faith, repentance, love, obedience, and feare, all are increased by prayer.

1 In respect of our selves.

I That the graces in us may be increased. *Jude* 20.

Partly, because they being exercised and set on worke in prayer, are more ready and apt to the performance of this duty than if they should be seldome inured thereto.

2 To exercise grace.

And partly also, because prayer brings us to Communion with *God*. For if the good company of the godly one with another will encrease grace, how much more will communion with the *Lord* himselfe quicken and encrease it?

3 To bring us to communion with *God*.

Moreover, this duty is required, that we may be acquainted with GOD, for there is a strangenesse betweene the *Lord* and us, when we doe not call upon his name. It is the cõmand which you shall finde in *Iob* 22. *Acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou mayest have peace with him, and thou shalt*

4 To avoid strangenesse with *God*.

Iob 22. 21.

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Simile. How acquaintance is gotten and loſt.

ſhalt have proſperity. Now, you know how acquaintance growes amongſt men; it is by converſing together, by ſpeaking one to another. On the other ſide, wee ſay, when that is broken off, when they ſalute not, or ſpeak not one to another, a ſtrangeneſſe growes; ſo it is in this: when wee come to the *Lord*, and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling upon him, wee grow acquainted with him, but without it wee grow ſtrangers, and the *Lord* dwels a far off, neither are we able to behold him, except we be accuſtomed to it, for the more we come into his preſence, the more wee are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reaſon why we ſhould uſe this, that we may get acquaintance with the *Lord*.

5 To teach us thankfulneſſe.

Likewiſe, that we may learne to be thankefull to him for thoſe mercies we have received from him; for if *God* ſhould beſtow mercies upon us unasked, we would forget them, his hand would not be acknowledged in them; and wee would not ſee his providence in diſpoſing thoſe bleſſings that we doe enjoy; but when wee come to aske every thing before him, wee are then ready to ſee his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are diſpoſed to more thankefulneſſe. So that it is a ſure rule commonly, What we winne with prayer, that wee weare with thankefulneſſe, and that which wee get without prayer, wee ſpend, and uſe without any lifting up of the heart to *God*, in praiſing him, and acknowledging his hand in beſtowing it upon us: ſo you ſee what this duty is. And,

Note. What wee get without prayer, is ſpent unthankfully.

Secondly,

Secondly, why the *Lord* will have this duty performed.

Now, thirdly, (in a word) what is it to *pray continually?* The word in the originall ſignifieth, ſuch a performance of this duty, as that you doe not ceaſe to doe it; at ſuch times as GOD requires it at your hands. Compare this with that in the ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy* 1. 3. The Apoſtle ſaith there, that he hath him in *continuall remembrance, praying for him night and day,* where the ſame word is uſed that is here. Now we cannot thinke that the Apoſtle had *Timothy* in continuall remembrance, that hee was never out of his thought, but the meaning is, when hee did call upon GOD, from day to day, hee ſtill remembred him. So that to *pray continually* is to pray very much, to pray at thoſe times when *God* requires us to pray. For it is the definition that Philoſophers give of idleneſſe, a man is then ſaid to bee idle, when hee doth not that which hee ought, in the time when it is required of him. He is an idle man that workes not when hee ought to worke; ſo hee is ſaid not to pray continually, that prayes not when hee ought to pray. In a like manner I conceive this to be the meaning of the Apoſtle, *Rejoyce evermore, Phil.* 4. 4. ſo here when he comes to this exhortation of prayer, hee contents not himſelfe to ſay, pray very often, but *pray continually,* as wee uſe to expreſſe our ſelves when wee would have a thing frequently done, wee ſay, ſee that you bee alwayes doing of this. So the Apoſtles ſcope is to

3 What it is to pray continually. Ἀδιαλείπτως

2 Tim. 1. 3.

Idleneſs, what.

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to ſhew that it ſhould be exceeding often, and that it ſhould be very much done. Hence we gather this by the way.

Obſer. A conſtant courſe of prayer, at leaſt twice a day is our duty.

That wee are bound to keepe our conſtant courſe of calling upon God, at the leaſt twice a day, whatſoever we doe more.

Queſt. But you will ſay, what ground have you for that, why doe you inſtance in that twice a day?

Anſw. The grounds of it.

1 From the Text.

The ground of it is this, in that the Apoſtle bids us *pray continually*, that is, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the leaſt we can doe it, is twice a day, we may doe it oftner, but that, I ſay, is the leaſt. When we have ſuch a command as this, when wee have ſuch a precept as this, *Pray continually*, and this rule illuſtrated by ſuch examples as we have in the Scripture, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kind that is ſaid of the generall example, 1 *Cor.* 10. *They are written for our learning?* When it is ſaid that *David* prayed oft, and *Daniel* expreſly in *Dan.* 6. 3. *Hee prayed three times a day*, that was his conſtant courſe, I ſay, wee may thinke we are bound to doe it at the leaſt twice a day.

2 From examples.

Dan. 6. 3.

3 From reaſons.

Conſider alſo a little the reaſon of it, why wee are bound to doe it; In the *Temple*, you know the *Lord* was worſhipped twice a day, there was *the Morning and Evening Sacrifice*. What was the ground of that commandement? There was no reaſon of it, but that the LORD might bee worſhipped, and that was the time that he would have it done twice a day, morning and evening: but beſides that, it was not onely

1 That God might be worſhipped.

that

that the *Lord* might be worſhipped, (wherein we ſhould follow that example of worſhipping him morning and evening.) But likewiſe our occaſions are ſuch, that, that is the leaſt we can doe, to call vpon him conſtantly morning and evening: for there is no day but wee uſe many bleſſings, and we take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leave; ſo that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a bleſſing upon them, or elſe thou haſt no right to them, thou haſt no lawfull uſe of them: that place is plaine, 1 *Tim.*4. *Every Creature of God is good, and ought not to bee refuſed, if it be received with thankeſgiving; for it is ſanctified by prayer.* So that, if you take common bleſſings every day, and doe not ſeeke them at the *Lords* hands before you take them, they are not ſanctified unto you, you have not a lawfull uſe of them you have no right unto them.

2 That we may uſe bleſſings aright.

1. *Tim.*4.4.

Beſides, my beloved, it is that which the *Lord* commands in every thing, *Make your requeſts knowne in every thing*, that is, whenſoever you need any thing, make your requeſts knowne; ſo *in every thing give thankes.* And therefore the leaſt we can doe, when we have received, and doe need ſo many mercies, is to give thankes, and to ſeeke to him ſo often, from day to day.

3 From Gods command.

Moreover, doe not our hearts need it, are they not ready to goe out of order, are they not ready to contract hardneſſe, are they not ready to goe from the *Lord*, and to bee hardened from *Gods* feare? Therefore this duty is needfull, in that re-

4 To keepe our hearts in order.

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gard to compoſe them, and bring them backe againe into order.

5 To get forgivneſſe of daily ſinnes.

Laſtly, doe not the ſinnes wee commit daily, put a neceſſity upon us of doing this, that they may bee forgiven, and done away, and that wee may bee reconciled to GOD againe? Therefore doe not think that it is an arbitrary thing to call upon *God*, twice a day, becauſe there is no particular expreſſe command; for if you conſider theſe places that I have named, and the reaſons, wee ſhall ſee there is a neceſſity lies upon us to doe it. So much ſhall ſerve for that, I come now to make ſome uſe of this that hath beene delivered.

Vſe 1. Shewing the miſery of wicked men, in that they cannot pray.

Firſt, in that ſuch prayers as the *Lord* accepts, are an expreſſion of holy deſires, ſuch deſires, I meane, as riſe from the regenerate part of a man: Hence then wee ſee that all naturall men are in a miſerable condition, when times of extremity come, & when the day of death comes, whē there is no other helpe in the world, but ſeeking to the *Lord*, when all the creatures forſake them, and are not able to help them, & there is no way to go to the *Lord* but by prayer; if prayer be an effect and fruit only of the regenerate part of a man, wherof a carnall man is not partaker, then he is in a miſerable condition. Therfore let ſuch men conſider this as put all off to times of extremity. Put the caſe, thou haſt warning enough, at ſuch a time, & haſt the uſe of thy underſtanding, yet thou art not able to doe any good without this regeneration; for, if there be not grace in the hart, thou art

Note.

not

not able to make a spirituall prayer to the *Lord*, such as hee accepts. Therefore take heed of deferring and putting off, labour to be regenerate, to have your hearts renewed, while you have time, and if thou be not able to call upon *God* in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it when thy wits, and thy spirits are spent and lost, in the times of sickenesse and extremity? Therefore let that be considered, which wee doe but touch by the way briefly.

Vse 2.

Secondly, if the LORD command this, if it bee the command of *God*, *Pray continually:* Then take heed of neglecting this dutie, rather bee exhorted to bee frequent, and fervent in it, *to continue therein, and watch thereto with all perseverance.* It is a common fault amongst us, either wee are ready to omit it, or come to it unwillingly, or else wee performe it in a careleſſe and negligent manner, not considering what a command lyeth upon the sons of men to performe it constantly and conscionably. I beseech you therefore consider first, that it is a priviledge purchased by the blood of *Iesus Christ*; *Christ* died for this end, it cost him the shedding of his blood, *That wee through him, might have entrance to the Throne of grace:* and will you let such a priviledge as this lie still? If you doe, so far as is in you, you cause his bloud to bee shed in vaine: for if you neglect the priviledges gotten by that blood, so far you neglect the blood that procured them; but to neglect this duty, is to neglect that. Besides, if wee aske you the reason, why you abstain from other sins, why you

Ephes 6.

Motiues to prayer.

1 Christ died for this end.

2 It is Gods command.

you ſteale not, why you commit not adulterie, and murther; The reaſon that you give, is, becauſe the *Lord* hath commanded you. Hath not the *Lord* commanded you to pray conſtantly, at all times? If you make conſcience of one commandement, why doe you not of another?

3 The example of Saints. Dan. 6. 10.

Conſider *Daniel* in this caſe, in the 6. of *Daniel*, hee would not omit a conſtant courſe of prayer, hee did it three times a day, and that was his ordinarie cuſtome. If hee would not omit it to ſpare his life, if hee would not omit it in ſuch a caſe of danger as that, why will you omit it for buſineſſe, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth, or pelfe, or pompe, or pleaſure, or whatſoever may draw you from that dutie?

4 The equity of it.

Doe but conſider, what an unreaſonable, and unequall thing it is, that when the *Lord* gives us meat and drinke, and clothes, from day to day, when hee gives us ſleepe every night, when he provides for us ſuch comforts, as wee have neede of, ſo that the leaſt creature doth not us any ſervice, but as farre as hee ſets it on worke to doe that ſervice, for us to forget him, and not to give him thankes, and not to aske theſe things at his hands, not to ſeeke unto him, but to live as without GOD *in the world*, as many doe, who neglect this dutie: I ſay, it is a profeſſion of living without GOD in the world; wee are ſtrangers to him, it is open rebellion againſt him. Therefore take heed of omitting it, take heed of neglecting it.

Beſides

Beſides all this, wee ſhould doe it for our owne ſakes, if wee conſider what uſe wee have of this dutie for our ſelves, Is it not the key that openeth all *Gods* treaſures? When Heaven was ſhut up, was not this the key that open'd it? when the wombes were ſhut up, was not this it that opened them? You know, *Eliah prayed for raine*; ſo wee may ſay for every other bleſſing. All GODS treaſures are locked up to thoſe that doe not call upon his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatſoever they be that we have occaſion to uſe, this is effectual. And this doth it better than any thing beſides; If a man be ſicke, I will be bold to ſay, a faithful praier is more able to heale his diſeaſe than the beſt medicine; *The praier of faith ſhal heale the ſicke, Iam.* 5. You know the woman that had the bloudy iſſue, when ſhe had ſpent all upon Phyſicians, and could doe no good, then ſhe came to Chriſt, and offered a faithfull prayer to him, that did it, when ſo many yeeres phyſicke could not doe it. *Beloved*, if there be a Prince, or a great man, whoſe minde wee would have turned towards us, a faithfull prayer will doe it ſooner than the beſt friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his requeſt, that the *Lord* would *give him favour in the ſight of the man*; if wee bee in any ſtrait, as it was in *Ioſephs* caſe, if we have any difficult matter to bring to paſſe, this praier and ſeeking to the *Lord*, will expedite, & ſet us at libertie ſooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more than all the wits in the world, becauſe it ſets *God* on worke. You have no power to doe any thing.

5 The benefit of it.

Prayer the key to unlocke *Gods* treaſures.

Iames 5.

Nehem. 1. 11.

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Prevalent prayer.

Certainely a praying Christian that is prevalent and potent with *God*, (that seekes to him) he is able to do more than all the witches in the world for they set the Divell a-worke, but prayer sets GOD a-worke, it sets him a-worke to do us good, to heale us, and to deliver us out of extremities: and therefore, I say, for our owne sakes, even out of selfe-love, and for common comforts you have need to use this. Certainely, if these things were beleeved, (for you heare them onely, you give us the hearing for the time, but if they were beleeved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be so negligent in it, or come in so carelesse a manner to it.

6 It is the best way to fill the heart with joy.

Furthermore, I beseech you to consider this, every man desires joy and comfort, and commonly one thing that keepes us off from this duty, is sports and pleasures, one thing or other, that wee take delight in, which dampe and hinder us in these things, in spirituall performances: Praier is the best way of all other to fill thy hart with true joy, as we see in *Ioh.* 16. 24. he saith there, *In my Name yee have asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your joy may bee full.* This is one motive that Christ useth to exhort us to bee frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full: which I take to be the meaning of that in *Iames* 5. *If any man be sad, let him pray*, not onely becaus prayer is sutable to such a disposition, but likewise it will cheere him up, it is the way to get comfort; *If any be sad, let him pray.* So it is in *Phil.* 4. 6. *In all things make your requests knowne, and the peace of God shall keepe*

John 16. 24.

Iames 5. 23.

Phil. 4. 6.

keepe you in the communion of Iesus Christ: That is it that brings peace, and quietnesse; and therefore there is much reason why we should be constant in this dutie, it is that which quickens us, it is that which fills us with joy, and comfort, and with true peace, which every one desires.

Moreover, consider it is thy buckler; prayer is the helmet that keeps thee safe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to goe to *God* by prayer, when he once shewes himselfe to be a stranger to the *Lord* by neglecting this duty, then hee is out of the pales of his protectiō, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes; for so is the *Lord* to those that pray: the *Lord* is a protection to those that call upon his Name. The very calling upon his name is a running under GODS wings, as it were, that is, a putting our selves under his shadow; but when thou neglectest that, thou wandrest abroad from him. Now doe wee not need protection from outward dangers, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of sinne and temptation? Surely praier is one part of the *spirituall Armour*, as we see *Eph. 6.* In the *compleat Armor of God, prayer* is reckoned vp the last, as that which buckls up all the rest; saith the Apostle, *Continue in prayer, and watch to it with perseverance.* And you have the more reason to do it, because it is not onely a part of this armour, but it enables you to use all the rest, to use the Word, and to use Faith, for prayer stirs them up all. What is it to have Armor, and not to have it ready? now prayer makes it ready. Therfore you

7 Our safety consists in it.

Ephes. 6.

Prayer teacheth to use the rest of the spirituall armour.

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Mat. 26. 41.

see *Christ* preſcribes the ſame rule in *Mat.* 26. 41 *Pray that you enter not into temptation:* as if that were the way to ſecure us, to ſhelter and to keepe us ſafe from falling into temptation. It is a thing I would adviſe you to, to pray, and to ſeeke to the *Lord* continually. Therefore, if wee ſhould uſe onely this one reaſon to you, to bee conſtant in this dutie, becauſe it is for your ſafety, it were ſufficient. You know, when a man is *as a Cittie whoſe VValles are broken downe*, when he lies expoſed to temptation, he is in a dangerous caſe. So I may uſe this *Dilemma* to you, if you have a diſpoſition, and you think thus, I hope I am well enough, I hope my heart is in a good temper enough, I am not now expoſed to any temptation, I feare nothing; make this argument againſt thy ſelfe, Why doe I neglect ſo good a gale, if my heart be ſo well diſpoſed to pray, why doe I then omit it? Againe, if there be any indiſpoſition in me, why doe I hazard my ſelfe? what if Satan ſhould ſet upon thee? what if the World ſhould ſet upon thee? what if a ſutable temptation agreeable to thy luſts be offred? art thou not in danger? and therfore a conſtant courſe ſhould be kept in it; we ſhould take heed of being negligent in it. And will a man now profeſſe that he hopes hee is the ſervant of *God*, and in a good eſtate, although he do not pray ſo much as others, (we ſpeak not of frequency ſimply, but of ſuch a performance as is required) I ſay, to profeſſe that thou art a ſervant of *Chriſt*, and that thou loveſt him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou

Note.

We cannot love Chriſt, but we muſt call upon him.

are

art his ſervant, and yet calleſt not upon him from day to day, that is an idle thing, it is impoſſible; if thou diddeſt love him, thou wouldeſt expreſſe thy ſelfe in calling upon his name. Shall a friend that is an acquaintance onely to us, in whom we delight, but come to us, and wee are willing to ſpend many houres with him; and ſhall we profeſſe our ſelves to be friends of *God*, and him to be our friend, and that wee delight in him, and yet neglect this dutie? This is a common thing amongſt you, when you ſee a man that meditates all his matters himſelfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to ſome body elſe, it muſt be ſuch a one as profeſſeth to bee a friend to him; now if this friend ſhould never heare from him, nor hee ſhould never ſpeake to him, or if hee doe, it is in ſuch a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not truſt him, hee doth not regard what hee can doe for him, and hee doth it ſo ſhortly, that hee can ſcarcely tell what the buſineſſe is, I ſay, in ſuch a caſe, would you not reckon his profeſſion of friendſhip to be an idle and empty profeſſion? Now apply it to thy ſelfe, thoſe that ſay they have communion with *God*, and they hope their eſtate is good enough, they ſtand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any neceſſity, for all the matters and occaſions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themſelves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to GOD, they doe it negligently, they poaſt over the matter, ſo as they have

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If wee bee friends of *God* wee muſt acquaint him with our ſtate by prayer.

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have ſcarce leaſure to expreſſe themſelves and their doings; doe you thinke hee will take ſuch for friends? and doe you thinke, that this is true, ſound, and hearty profeſſion? Therefore (to end this) I beſeech you conſider it, and take heed of being remiſſe and negligent in it; for you ſee it is a command from the LORD,

Pray continually.

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FINIS.

THE

THE SECOND SERMON.

1 Thes. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NOT to repeat what hath beene delivered, but to presse this point on us a little further, (for, what is more necessarie, than that wee should keepe a constant course in this dutie, since the very life of Religion consists in it?) I adde this to all I pressed in the morning, that if you doe neglect this dutie, it expoſeth you to great disadvantage; both for the outward man, and for the inward man; and there are but these two that you need to care for.

8 The omission of it doth disadvantage men.

For

1 In the outward man.

For the outward man, it deprives you of the bleſſing: put the caſe you have never ſo good ſucceſſe in your enterprizes, put the caſe you have outward comforts in abundance, yet ſtill the bleſſing is wanting; and not onely ſo, but it uncovers the roofe, as it were, and the curſe is rained downe upon your tables, upon your meat and drinke, upon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. Wee conſider not what we doe, when we neglect this duty, to what danger wee expoſe our ſelves unto from day to day; for it is one thing to have outward comforts, and another thing to have the bleſſing with them.

Simile.

2 In the inward man.

Againe, conſider what loſſe you ſuffer in the inward man, when yee neglect this duty at any time; for that is readie to be diſtempered, and to goe out of order, it is readie to contract hardneſſe, to contract ſoile; ſpirituall grace is ready to decay. It fals out with a mans heart, as it doth with a garden that is neglected, it will quickly bee over-runne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it, and the way to looke to it, is conſtancie in this dutie. That is a notable place *Iob* 15.4. when *Eliphaz* obſerved ſome diſtemper in *Iobs* affections (as he apprehended it) he tels him that the ſpeech hee uſed was not comely, but vaine, and ſinfull: and what then? *Surely Iob* (ſaith hee) *thou reſtrayneſt prayer from the Lord:* As if he ſhould ſay, It is impoſſible, *Iob*, that thou ſhouldeſt fall into theſe diſtempers, if thou diddeſt keepe thy courſe conſtantly in this duty; therefore

Simile.

Iob. 15.4.

ſore ſurely (ſaith he) thou reſtraineſt praier from the *Lord*; So it is with us, let us reſtraine prayer from GOD, and diſtempers will ariſe quickly in our ſpirits, worldly minded neſſe will bee ready to grow upon us, wee ſhall bee apt to bee carnall, wee ſhall forget *God*, and forget our ſelves, and forget the good purpoſes, and deſires wee had: and therefore that you may keepe your hearts in order, you muſt keepe a conſtant courſe in this dutie: which if you do, though your peace be interrupted, this will repaire it againe, it will make up the breaches againe, though there be ſome diſtempered affections that grow upon us, yet prayer will compoſe all. As ſleepe compoſeth drunkenneſſe, ſo praier will compoſe the affections: a man may pray himſelfe ſober againe, nothing doth it ſooner, nothing doth it more effectually; and this you ſhall finde, that as you either omit it, or ſlight it over, ſo you ſhall finde a proportionable weakeneſſe growing upon the inward man, as the bodie feeles, when it neglecteth either ſleepe, or diet, or exerciſe: therefore to end this exhortation, let us bee conſtant in it.

Inward diſtempers ariſe, if praier be neglected.

Simile.

Onely remember this, (when wee exhort you thus to keepe a conſtant courſe, for which you heard ſo many reaſons in the morning, I ſay, remember this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a cuſtomarie and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the *Lord* takes not our prayers by number, but by weight: when it is an outward picture, a dead carcaſſe

We were as good not pray at all, as doe it in a formall overly manner.

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carcasse of prayer, when there is no life, no fervency in it, hee regards it not. Be not deceived in this, it is a very usuall deceit; it may bee a mans conscience would bee upon him, if hee should omit it altogether; and therefore when hee doth something, his heart is satisfied, and so hee growes worse and worse: therefore consider, I say, that the very doing of this duty, is not that which the *LORD* heeds, but he will have it so performed, that the end may be obtained, and that the thing may bee effected, for which you pray. If a man send his servant to goe to such a place, it is not his going to and fro that hee regards, but hee would have him to dispatch the businesse; so in all other workes, hee cares not for the formality of performance, but would have the thing so done, that it may be of use to him: If you set a servant to make a fire for you, and hee goe, and lay some greene wood together, and perhaps put a few coales under, this is not to make a fire for you, but he must either get dry wood, or hee must blow till it burne, and be fit for use: so when your hearts are unfit, when they are like greene wood, when you come to warne them, and to quicken them by prayer to *God*, it may bee you post over this dutie, and leave your hearts as cold, and as distempered as they were before: My *Beloved*, this is not to performe this dutie. This duty is effectually performed, when your hearts are wrought upon by it, and when they are brought to a better tune, and to a better temper than they were before. If you find

When prayer is performed aright.

Simile.

Simile.

Prayer in a customary manner amends not the heart.

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to expostulate the thing before the LORD, and not to give over, till you have set all the wheeles of your soule right, till you have made your hearts perfect with GOD; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off; if you finde a deadnesse, unaptnes and indisposition in you, you must lift up your soules to the *Lord*, and not give ouer till you bee quickned; and this is to performe the dutie in such a manner as the *Lord* accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the dutie goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke and zealous manner: for hee that omits it altogether is a profane person, and he that performes it zealously, and to purpose, is an holy man; but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but he will not doe it throughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou hast slubbred over this dutie from day to day; that thou performest it in negligent manner, and perfunctorilie, know that it is an hypocriticall performance; and therefore when we spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this dutie, still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may have heate and life in it, that it may bee acceptable to GOD, and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of grace,

What we must doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie, what.

Note.

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grace, and to a better temper, than (it may bee) you found them in, when you went about the duty.

Obiect. 1. This duty requireth much time.

And if you obiect now; I, but it will coſt us much time to doe this.

Anſw. Three-fold. *Anſw.* 1. The time ſpent in prayer hindreth not.

Indeed this is one common cauſe, among all the reſt, that keepes us off from the thorow performance of this duty, but (to ſpeake to that in a word) remember this, that the time that is ſpent in calling upon GOD, hinders you not in your buſineſſe, though it ſeeme to hinder you, and though it takes ſo much from the heape, yet indeed it increaſeth the heape, as it is ſaid of tithes and offerings, *Bring them in*, and thinke not, that becauſe you leſſen the heape, that you are poorer men: no, ſaith the *Lord*, it will increaſe your ſtore, *I will open the windowes of Heaven*, and you ſhall have ſo much the more for it; ſo it is true in this caſe. In other things you ſee it well enough; You know, the baiting of the horſe hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the ſcith, though there be a ſtop in the worke for a time, yet as our common ſaying is, *A whet is no let*, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Mal. 3. 10.

Simile.

Anſw. 2. It is greater than worldly buſineſſe, and therfore ſhould be prefered.

Secondly, put the caſe it were, yet is it not the greater buſineſſe? what is it that you get by all your labours, and travailes? if it bee riches, it comes not into any compariſon with grace and holineſſe, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, ſay it bee ſomewhat more noble than that, as learning, or knowledge: yet what

what is that to the renewing of *Gods* Image in us? were it not better, to ſpend time to get grace to make us *rich to God*; to make us to get ſtrength in the inward man, to paſſe thorow all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefeſt excellency of all others? for is not that the beſt excellency? When *Adam* was in *Paradiſe*, the having of *Gods Image*, you know, it excelled all other excellencies in the world; and ſo it doth ſtill: now the more you pray, the more you get of this *Image*: for a man of much praier is alwaies a man of much grace, it much increaſeth thoſe ſpirituall gifts, which are better then all the outward thinges you can get by your imploiment and diligence in them: therefore, I ſay, though it do ſpend you much time, yet know (as *Chriſt* ſaid to *Mary*) hee that prayes much, though hee be a great loſer in other things, yet he *chooſeth the better part*.

What is mans beſt excellencie.

Prayer Increaſeth Gods Image.

Laſt of all, conſider this, when thou comeſt to offer ſacrifice to *God*, wouldeſt thou offer that which coſt thee nothing? If thy continuing in prayer and ſpending much time in it, ſhould coſt thee ſome diſadvantage in thy affaires, & ſhould loſe thee that which another gaines, ſo that thou getteſt not ſo much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doeſt not ſo much in thy trade, in thy buſineſſe, thou doeſt not ſet things in order, as thou mighteſt have done; yet know this, that it is great wiſedome to make our ſervice to GOD coſtly to us; you know *Davids* choiſe; *Shall I offer to the Lord that which coſt me nothing?* and therfore

Anſw. 3. We muſt performe it though with diſaduantage, that our ſacrifice may coſt ſomewhat

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hee would needes give the worth to *Araunah* the *Iebuſite* for that which he bought; in like manner ſince it is to a good Maſter that ſees what you doe, that knowes what it coſteth, and what loſſe you are at, and withall that is willing and able to recompence it, why ſhould you ſhorten this buſineſſe, and poſt it over, becauſe of other occaſions, and other buſineſſe that you have to doe?

Obiect. 2. In reſpect of unfitneſſe.

Oh, but a man will ſay further, I am willing to doe it, but I am unfit for it, and it may be the longer I ſtrive, the unfit I grow.

Anſw. 1. God accepts the will for the deed, when.

To this I anſwer, firſt, in generall, if thou doe it as well as thou canſt, though thou do it not ſo well as thou ſhouldeſt, in this caſe, *God accepts the will for the deed*, when a man puts his ſtrength to it, when there is no indiligence in him, when there is no lazineſſe, (for in that caſe hee will not accept the will for the deed, but) when a man doth his utmoſt, as thoſe that would have given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deed, in 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. I ſay, when thou doeſt what thou canſt, when thou ſpareſt no labour to get thy heart vpon the wing, to raiſe and quicken it, and to inlarge it to this dutie; then God accepts it.

2 *Cor.* 8. 12, 13.

Anſw. 2. The beſt fitting to it, is to fall upon performance.

But againe, I adde further, there is an unskilfulneſſe in going about this dutie: many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our ſelves fitter, by ſpending time in thoughts, and meditations before; which I deny not but they may bee profitable, but yet this I will propound to you, that

that the beſt way to fit our ſelves to this dutie, when we finde an indiſpoſition unto it, as, not to ſtay till wee have prepared our ſelves by meditation, but to fall preſently upon this dutie; (I will give you the reaſon of it) becauſe though a preparation is required for the performance of every ſpirituall dutie, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when wee ſay we muſt prepare: for, if we ſpeake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the dutie is the beſt preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if he were to doe any bodily exerciſe, there muſt bee ſtrength of body, hee muſt be fed well, that he may have ability; but the uſe of the very exerciſe it ſelfe, the very particular act, which is of the ſame kinde with the exerciſe, is the beſt thing to fit him for it: ſo in this dutie of prayer, it is true, to be ſtrong in the *inward man*, to have much knowledge, to have much grace, makes a man able and fit for the dutie; but if you ſpeake of the immediate preparation for it, I ſay, the beſt way to prepare us is the very duty it ſelfe, as al actions (of the ſame kind) increaſe the habits, ſo prayer makes us fit for prayer; and that is a rule, *The way to godlineſſe is in the compaſſe of godlineſſe it ſelfe*; that is, the way to grow in any grace is the exerciſe of that grace.

Simile.

Exerciſe of grace increaſeth it.

Note.

It is a point that *Luther* preſſed, and hee preſſed it out of his owne experience, and this reaſon hee uſeth; In this caſe, ſaith he, when a man goes about to fit himſelfe, by working on his owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

Note this expreſſion of *Luther.*

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his unfitneſſe by his owne ſtrength, and to contend with Satan alone; but when a man feeleth an indiſpoſition, and goes to *God* by prayer, reſting on *God* to fit him, hee takes *Gods* ſtrength to oppoſe the indiſpoſition, and deadneſſe of his fleſh, and the temptations of Satan, that hinder him, and reſiſt him. Therefore you ſhall find this to bee the beſt way to fit your ſelves for prayer, namely to performe the duty. If you ſeeke to expedite, and devolve your ſelves out of your unfitneſſe, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly you involve your ſelves farther into thoſe labyrinths, and are caught more and more. But this I ſpeake by the way concerning matter of unfitnes: The maine anſwer to this objection is, that which I gave you before, that if a man doe what he can, and do it faithfully, and in ſincerity, that indiſpoſition ſhall not hinder him: therefore ſtill remember it muſt be done, it is not an excuſe to us, at any time, nor ought to be, that we ſhould omit the dutie wholly, under pretence of an unfitneſſe.

By labouring againſt indiſpoſition by our owne ſtrength, we are more intangled.

Object. 3 A man is readie to ſay againe. But I find many difficulties, how ſhall I doe to remove them?

Anſw. The beſt way hereunto I can take, is the very naming of the difficulties themſelves to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore conſider this in generall, that it is not an eaſie thing to call upon GOD conſtantly: our miſpriſion of the dutie, ou reckoning of it, that it is a more facile and eaſie thing than it is, make us more to ſlight it, and cauſeth

Seuen Impediments in prayer, that makes it difficult.

us

us not to goe about it with that intention, which otherwise wee would, but consider a little what it is. The dutie is very spirituall, and our *hearts* are *carnall*, and it is no easie thing to bring spirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

1 Impediment: Our hearts are carnall. *Note.*

Then againe, our natures are very *backward* to come into the *Lords presence*, partly by reason of his great glory, by reason of his Majesty, who *dwells in light unaccessible*; and our weake eyes are apt to be dazled with it; and partly out of vnaccustomednesse, we are not vsed to it, and therefore we are ready to flie from him, as beasts that are wilde, and never were tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from us, so backward is our nature to come into his presence.

2 Our backwardnesse to come into *Gods* presence, and why. *Simile.*

Againe, the variety of occasions hinders us, every thing keepes us backe, for if a mans heart be cheerfull, it is apt to delight in other things; and if a mans heart be sad (on the other side) if it be a slight sadnesse, men are ready to drive it away with company, and with sports, and with doing other things; But if the sadnesse be great, we are swallowed vp with anguish of spirit, and then any thing is easier than to pray; as you may see by *Iudas*, it was easier for him to dispatch himselfe, than to goe and call vpon *God*; so it is with men, when they have excessiue griefe, when their anguish of heart is exceeding great: so that, whether a man hath a cheerefull disposition, or sad, whether the sadnesse bee great or small, still you shall find a difficulty. If wee bee idle, and have

3 Variety of occasions hinder us. *Note.*

nothing to doe, our hearts will bee poſſeſt with vaine thoughts, and if wee bee full of buſineſſe, that diſtracts us alſo, and indiſpoſeth us on the other ſide: ſo ſtill there are impediments.

4 Worldly cares.

But there is one great impediment, among the reſt, and moſt common, which is *worldly cares*, and worldly minded-neſſe; worldly cares hinder ſpirituall prayer, and ſpirituall conference, and the holy performance (almoſt) of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficulty in it, looke narrowly if that be not the cauſe.

5 Want of faith in Gods power and providence.

Againe, another great cauſe of this difficulty in prayer, of ſuch backwardneſſe to it, of ſuch indiſpoſition to it, is, becauſe wee doe not well conſider the nature of GOD, we want *faith in his power*, and in his providence; wee doe not conſider GODS diſpoſing hand, which hath the guidance in every thing that belongs to us, in health in ſickeneſſe, in poverty, in riches, in good ſucceſſe, and ill ſucceſſe: for if wee did ſee the providence of GOD, and acknowledge it more, wee ſhould be ready to call upon him; but this want of faith in his providence, that the *Lord* is not ſeene in his greatneſſe, and in his mighty power, this cauſeth men to bee backeward to ſeeke to him, but very forward to ſeeke to the creatures. When wee have any thing to doe, of any conſequence, wee are ready to poſt from this man to that man, and from this meanes to that meanes, but very backward and negligent to goe to *God* in prayer, to have the thing brought to paſſe that wee deſire, and this ariſeth from want of faith,

When we are ſo backward to pray to God.

and

and from ignorance of GOD, and our not right conſideration of him.

Beſides, *Satan* hinders us exceedingly in this dutie; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what conſequence, and therefore he doth as the *Aramites* did, hee *fights not againſt ſmall nor great, but againſt the King*; he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greateſt enemy which he hath, and if he can keep us from prayer, hee hath the upper hand of us, hee hath wreſted the weapon out of our hands, hee hath diſarmed us, as it were, and then he may do what he will with us.

6 Satan hindereth.

1 *King* 22. 31.

Laſtly, the ſins we commit, eſpecially groſſe ſinnes, they are a great hindrance to this dutie, and keepe from the ſpirituall and cheerefull performance of it: for ſinne wounds the conſcience, it diſjoynteth and diſmembers the ſoule, and a diſjoynted member, you know, is unfit to doe any buſineſſe; yea, when the ſinne is healed and forgiven, yet there is a ſoreneſſe left in the heart, though ſome aſſurance of pardon ſhould follow upon the commiſſion of a great ſin, ſo that this is another impediment. But I muſt not ſtand to reckon up any more, for we ſhall finde enow by continuall experience.

7 The commiſſion of great ſinnes.

Simile.

The uſe wee muſt make of it is, that if the impediments bee ſo many, and the difficulties that keepe us from a conſtant courſe in prayer; and from the performance of it to purpoſe, ſo great, then we muſt put on a reſolution to breake through all; and lay it, as an inviolable law upon

Vſe. What courſe is to be taken againſt theſe impediments.

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our ſelves, that we will not alter. Let us thinke with our ſelves that the thing is difficult, and will coſt all the care, and all the intention that may be; yea, when thou haſt overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou ſhalt meet with new conflicts, new diſtempers, new affections, new ſtrength of luſts, and a new indiſpoſition of mind will be on thee, and therefore hee that will bee conſtant in this dutie, muſt put on a ſtrong reſolution; as it was the ſaying of a holy man, (one of the holieſt men that theſe latter times had) that hee never went to pray to *God*, but he found ſo many impediments, that except hee bound himſelfe by an unalterable reſolution, which he reſolved not to breake upon any occaſion, hee could never have a conſtant courſe in it, or, if hee had, hee ſhould never have kept himſelfe from a formall, cuſtomary performance of it. But I will adde no more, to preſſe this upon you, there hath been enough ſaid, I beſeech you conſider it.

A new indiſpoſition will bee on us daily to prayer.

Note this well.

I come now to that I promiſed in the morning to doe, which is, that which doth exceedingly ſtrengthen us to the performance of this duty of calling upon *GOD*, of *praying continually* (which we are here commanded to doe) *viz.* is to remove certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that ſecretly weaken the eſtimation of this trueth, and inſenſiblie, take us off, when we marke them not: for, Beloved, when we are ſo negligent in it, ſurely there is ſomething that is the cauſe of it, and if wee could finde the cauſe,

Removing the objections that are againſt prayer, doth ſtrengthen us to the duty.

cauſe, and remove it, we could not ſpend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but theſe foure briefly. 4 Objections againſt prayer.

Firſt, a man is ready to ſay, what need I ſpend ſo much time, and be ſo large in the expreſſion of my wants to *God*, when hee knowes them? I cannot make them better knowne to him, he knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it? *Object.* 1.

To this I anſwer (in a word, becauſe it is an objection that hath not much weight it it) that it is true, the *Lord* knowes thy wants, but withall, hee will have thee to know them; becauſe otherwiſe thou wilt not ſeek to him for them, thou wilt not ſet a price upon the things that hee beſtowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankfull to him when hee hath granted them; and therefore you ſhall finde our Saviour Chriſt uſeth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken us to praier, ſaying, *Your heavenly Father knowes what you have need of*; what then? Shall we not therefore pray? Yes, ſaith hee, therefore pray yee the more earneſtly, and the more importunately to him: for ſince he knowes your wants, hee will bee more ready to heare your requeſts. *Answ.* Why God will haue us to pray though hee knows our wants. *Matth.* 6.

I, but it will be ſaid again, that he doth not only know them, but he alſo meanes, and purpoſeth to beſtow them: for hee hath made a promiſe to us, and his promiſe is firme and ſure, and *GOD* is juſt, and muſt keepe his promiſe, and when hee *Object.* 2.

hath

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hath fully purpoſed it, what needs ſo much praying to bring it to paſſe?

Anſw. 1. Though God purpoſe to give bleſſings, it is upon condition that we pray.

I anſwer, the promiſes of *God* are to be underſtood with this ſecret condition annexed, I will doe ſuch and ſuch a thing for you, if you pray; though the condition be not alwaies expreſſed: and therefore wee ſee when *God* promiſed things in particular, yet ſtill they prayed, and prayed earneſtly. When he promiſed *Eliah* that it ſhould raine, yet, wee ſee he prayed, and contended much in his prayer; ſo when he made a promiſe to *David*, that he would *make him an houſe*, yet you know, *David* went to the houſe of the *Lord* & ſate before him, and made earneſt prayer, as you may ſee in the ſecond book of *Samuel:* ſo *Daniel* had a particular promiſe, yet he praied, & prayed long. The example of our Saviour *Chriſt* is without exceptiõ, who had all the promiſes ſure to him, yet, you ſee, *he prayed*, yea, *he ſpent whole nights in prayer*; and therfore you muſt underſtand it, that though you have a promiſe made, though the thing bee never ſo ſure to you, yet it is to bee underſtood with this condition, if you call upon *God*.

1 *King* 18. 41, 42

2 *Sam.* 7. 11. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. *Dan.* 9.

Anſw. 2. He will haue us doe it to worſhip him.

Now why the *Lord* will have you do it, I ſhewed you many reaſons in the morning, to which we will add this one: What if the *Lord* will have thee call upon him, though he purpoſe to do the thing, even for this end, that thou maiſt worſhip him? For, what elſe is it to worſhip the *Lord?* you ſhall find this uſuall in the Old Teſtament, *The people bowed themſelves and worſhipped*, or *they fell upon their faces and worſhipped*. The meaning

To worſhip God, what.

is

is this, to worship *God* is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worthinesse that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe use so much outward demeanor and observance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him above another man: and as outward gesture, is the outward worshipping of *God*, so the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now you shall see, prayer gives an acknowledgement of his Attributes most of any thing: for hee that prayes to *God*, hee doth in so doing acknowledge his *omnipresence*, and his *omniscience*; that he heares that which the idols of the *Gentiles* could not do; that hee knowes the secret of mens hearts, that neither men nor Angels can doe.

Prayer acknowledgeth all Gods attributes.

Omniscience.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his Almighty *Power*, that hee is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when wee come and seeke to him.

Power.

Thirdly, it acknowledgeth his *Mercy* and his goodnesse; that he is not onely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Mercie.

Lastly, it acknowledgeth his *Truth*, that as he hath promised, so, I make account he will performe it, when I goe and seeke to him; in a word, all the Attributes of *God* are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore, therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe and seeke to him, and pray to him; for in so doing you acknowledg him, yea, you acknowledge him to be a *Lord* and a father; as when we see a childe runne to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him food:

Truth.

Simile.

food and rayment, wee ſay, ſurely ſuch a man is his Father; ſo this very praying to GOD, is a worſhipping of him, becauſe it acknowledgeth his Attributes, and his relation to us, and ours to him.

Object. 3. But againe, thirdly, it will bee objected, I but, alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpoſe of Almighty *God*, if hee doe not intend to doe this thing for mee, ſhall I hope to alter him?

Anſw. God is not changed by our prayers, but our ſelves. *Simile.* For anſwere hereto, I ſay this, in brieſe, that when you doe call upon *God*, hee is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you; as wee have ſaid to you heretofore, when a Phyſician is ſought unto by his Patient, the Patient deſires him earneſtly to give him ſuch a cordiall, and ſuch a reſtorative Phyſicke, that is, pleaſing to him, the Phyſician denies him long, yet in the end, hee yeelds unto it, Why? not becauſe there is any change in the Phyſician, but becauſe there is a change in the Patient, he is now fitted for this, before hee was not: ſo then the Phyſician yeelds now, whereas before hee refuſed; and yet the change is in the Patient, and not in the Phyſician: in like manner beloved, when you goe about to ſtrive with *God* in prayer, when you contend, and wraſtle with him, (for ſo we ought to doe) when you uſe many reaſons to perſwade him, you alter not him, but your ſelves: for thoſe arguments that you uſe, are not ſo much to perſwade him to helpe you,

you, as to perſwade your owne hearts to more faith, to more love, to more obedience, to more humilitie and thankefulneſſe; and that indeed is the reaſon, why prayer prevailes with *God*, not that the very ſending it up is that that prevailes with him, but becauſe a faithfull and ſpirituall praier puts the heart in a better diſpoſition, ſo that a man is now made readie to receive a bleſſing at *Gods* hands, that before hee was not: And therefore, when you thinke you draw *God* to you, with your arguments, in truth, you draw your ſelves neerer to him; as when a man in a ſhip pluckes a rocke, it ſeemeth as if he plucked the rocke neerer to the ſhip, when as indeed the ſhip is plucked neerer to the rocke: ſo, I ſay, we draw our ſelves neerer to the *Lord*; now when wee draw neerer to the *LORD*, in prayer, and there is a ſpirituall diſpoſition wrought in our hearts, by the exerciſe of this dutie, then indeede the *Lord* drawes neere to us, to ſend us helpe, and to grant our requeſts, that wee put up to him; and therfore I ſay (which you ſhould marke by the way) that every praier, as it hath a higher pitch of holineſſe in affection, and as it hath ſtronger arguments in it, ſo it is a better prayer, not becauſe this prayer ſhall prevaile with GOD more, or, that the excellencie of this prayer ſhould move him, but becauſe this pitch of holy affection, and ſtrength of argument workes upon your hearts: for the ſtrength of arguments moves your underſtanding, and the holineſſe of affection puts your will in a frame,

Arguments in prayer are not to perſwade God but our ſelues.

Simile.

What prayers are the beſt.

frame, and ſo diſpoſeth your hearts, and fits you, as the patient, we ſpake of before, is fitted when the Phyſician is willing to give the thing he deſired.

Obiect. 4. Two-fold.

But the laſt objection, which indeed is more than all the reſt, is this;

1

A man is ready to pray, wee ſee there are many men that doe not call upon *God*, and yet enjoy many mercies: it may bee, a man can ſay with himſelfe, when hee did not uſe to pray, he had health, and ſleepe, and protection.

2

Againe, on the other ſide, he hath prayed for ſuch and ſuch things, and yet they have not been granted. So this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtained bleſſings, without praier, and againe hee hath praied, and yet he hath not obtained the bleſſings he ſought for, at the *Lords* hands.

Anſw. 1

For anſwer to the firſt, that men doe obtaine many bleſſings that doe not pray, (as how many young men are there, and old men too, that have health, and wealth, and peace, and libertie, and abundance of all things, and yet either they ſeek not to *God*, or if they doe, yet not in a holy and ſpirituall manner) and therefore this objection had need to bee anſwered; which I will doe with as much brevitie as I can.

1 Anſwer to the firſt part of the objection. *Anſw.* 1.

Firſt, though they have theſe bleſſings, yet they have them uncertainely, they have no promiſe of them, they cannot build upon them; whereas they are ſure mercies to the righteous man, hee can build upon theſe bleſſings: for he hath

hath a father to goe to, whoſe love hee knowes, and hee hath ſure promiſes to build on; the other, though hee hath them, yet hee is in a ſlippery place, when he enjoyes them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemy, and he knowes not how long he ſhall enjoy them.

Men that have bleſſings without prayer, have them uncertainely.

But I anſwer againe, (which is the chiefe anſwer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having bleſſings through the *providence of God*, and betweene having them from the *mercy* of GOD, and by vertue of his promiſe, and out of his love to us in *Chriſt Ieſus*. A naturall man may have many bleſſings of GOD, (ſo *God* ſaid that hee made *Ieroboam* a King, he gave him a Kingdome; and many ſuch paſſages we ſhall finde, when men come unjuſtly to them, as he did to the Kingdome, yet *God* ſaith, he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet hee hath them not in mercy: for if thou haſt theſe bleſſings, health, and ſleepe, and ſucceſſe in thy enterprizes, from day to day, and yet thy heart tels thee within, that thou haſt not ſought them at the *Lords* hands, as thou oughteſt, I ſay to ſuch a man, (and marke it) it were better for him that hee ſhould want them: for certainely, when hee hath them, in this manner, he hath them without a bleſſing; yea, he hath them with a curſe, and ſo had better to be without them; as it had bin better for *Achab* to have been without his vineyard, and as it had beene better for *Gehezi*, to have gone without his reward, that hee had of *Naaman*

Anſw. 2. Difference betweene having of bleſſings through the providence of God, and from the love of God.

To have outward things without praier we were better want them.

man the *Aſſyrian*, for you know hee had the leproſie with it: it had beene better for the children of *Iſrael* to have gone without their quailes; for you know the curſe that followed, death went along with them; ſo when a man ſhall have peace and proſperitie, & abundance of all things without ſeeking them at the *Lords* hands, from day to day, I ſay, he had much better want them: for there goes death together with them. It is ſaid plainely, that *eaſe ſlayeth the fooliſh*, (that is to ſay) this very proſperitie, this thriving (notwithſtanding a neglecting of prayer, and of holy duties) I ſay, it carries death along with it, as the obtaining of the Vineyard, brought death to *Achab*, the getting of the Kingdome was the deſtruction of *Ieroboam*, and therefore men have little cauſe to comfort themſelves with this, that they enjoy many bleſſings, and never pray for them.

Anſw. 3. Many things beſtowed on wicked men for the Churches good.

But, to anſwere this point more fully, I ſay, many bleſſings are beſtowed upon men, not for their owne ſakes, but for the Churches ſake. A man may have ſtrength of bodie, hee may have great gifts of mind, he may have great ſucceſſe in uſing thoſe gifts, he may bring great enterprizes to paſſe, ſo that you may truly ſay, the hand of *God* is with him, all this may bee done, not for his own ſake, but for the ſake of the Church, and glorie of *God* ſome other way, that hee might doe ſome ſervice; to this purpoſe you ſee, it is plainely ſaid of *Cyrus*, (*Iſaiah* 45.4.) ſaith the *Lord* there, *For Iacob my ſervants ſake, and for Iſ-*

Iſay 45.4.

rael

rael mine elects ſake I have called thee by name, and have given thee this great power, and all this great ſucceſſe, although thou thy ſelfe have not knowne mee. (Marke) *Cyrus* was a moſt proſperous man, *Gods* hand was mighty with him, and yet all this was not for his owne ſake, but for the Churches ſake: ſo you may think it is when men proſper, many times, it is not for their owne ſakes, but to fulfill ſome other end of GODS providence: and therefore, marke this, and keepe it for a rule; If thou proſpereſt in thine enterpriſes if thou enjoyeſt wealth, and peace, and abundance of all things, and art conſcious that thou doeſt not ſeeke to *God*, from day to day, that thou keepeſt not thy heart right and ſtraight, and perfect before him, neither doeſt call upon him, in an holy and ſpirituall manner, (certainely it is for one of thoſe cauſes) thou haſt it without a bleſſing, and with a curſe, thou haſt it for other ends, and not for good to thy ſelfe; and therfore thou haſt it very uncertainely, it may bee tooke from thee, thou knoweſt not how ſoone; yea, and this thou ſhalt be ſure of, that it ſhall bee taken from thee then, when of all other times it will be unfiteſt for thee: as a theefe comes at a time when men leaſt looke for him, ſo *deſtruction comes ſuddenly* upon theſe men: *God* cuts them, as a man when he would have trees to dye, hee loppes them in that ſeaſon, that of all other is the unfitteſt, when the ſappe is in the tree, and the lopping wil cauſe them to wither; ſo the *Lord* will ſtrike them in a ſeaſon, that ſhall bee moſt

Note.

Simile.

Simile.

unfit, moſt unlookt for. It is quite contrary with the Saints, hee cuts them in due ſeaſon, hee lops them in due time, when it is beſt for them, that they may grow the better for it.

Anſwer to the ſecond part of the objection.

But now for the other part of the objection, it may be, many among you are now ready to ſay, I have prayed for ſuch and ſuch things, and I have beene earneſt, and yet the *Lord* hath denyed mee. My Beloved, if wee can ſatisfie this objection wee ſhall then take this impediment away, that we propound in this objection, which as I ſaid, hath thoſe two parts. Therefore to this I anſwer:

Anſw. Our prayers are oft times amiſſe in one of theſe three reſpects.

First, if thou haſt not been heard in thy prayer, conſider, whether thou haſt not *prayed amiſſe*; it is a common fault among us, when wee have ſpent much time in prayer, and it may bee, wee have ſpent time in faſting and prayer, and the thing is not granted, wee preſently lay it upon the *Lord*, that he hath not heard, when many times the cauſe is in our not praying as wee ought: It may bee thou haſt beene very earneſt, and therefore thou hopeſt thou haſt done very well; I tell thee, thou maiſt be very earneſt, and importunate with the *Lord*, when it may bee no more but a naturall deſire, as when a man hath need to be directed in a difficult caſe, that much concernes him; when hee hath neede to bee extricated, and taken out of ſuch a difficultie, and ſtrait, wherein he is involved; when hee hath need of ſucceſſe in ſuch an enterpriſe, or any thing of that nature; I ſay, a man may be earneſt with the

First, in reſpect of the principle whence they flow, when they are but naturall deſires.

Lord

Lord in ſuch a caſe, and yet his prayer may bee amiſſe, it may not bee a ſpirituall prayer, it may not bee an expreſſion of holy deſires to the *Lord*; for they onely prevaile with him: and yet I ſay not, the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde winde to the ſailes, though holines may guide the rudder, and keepe the courſe, and make the ſterage, yet naturall deſires may make us more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I ſay, conſider thy prayer.

Naturall deſires not excluded in true prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, Conſider againe, when thou haſt ſought ſo earneſtly to *God*, whether it bee not to *beſtow it upon thy luſts*, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, *Iam.* 4. 3. when thou haſt a buſineſſe to be performed, it may bee, thou art earneſt with *God*, but haſt thou not an eye to thy owne glory, to thine owne praiſe and credit in it? when thou waſt earneſt for health, was it not that thou mighteſt live more deliciouſly? when thou deſireſt wealth, and ſucceſſe in thine enterpriſes, that tend to mend thy ſtate, is it not out of ſome ambition? you know, that deſire is condemned, *If any man will bee rich*; is it not a deſire of greatneſſe? would you not be ſome body in your place, and ſet up your houſe and family? Such things indeede GOD beſtowes upon men, but to have our deſires pitched upon them, and to pray for them in that ſenſe, is amiſſe; and my rule for it is in the firſt of *Timothy* the ſixth chapter, the ninth verſe, *If a man will bee rich, &c.* that is, when a man deſireth exceſſively more than food and rayment

Secondly, in reſpect of the end, when they are for the ſatisfaction of our luſts. *Iam.* 4. 3.

1 *Tim.* 6. 9.

When the naturall affection degenerates into a luſt.

convenient for him, then certainely the naturall affection is degenerate into a luſt; for when any affection exceeds, it ceaſeth to be an affection, and begins to be a luſt: and therefore where it is ſaid, *If any man will be rich, &c.* it is ſaid after, it is a *luſt*.

Queſt.

But you will ſay, how ſhall a man know, when his prayer is to beſtow that which he prayeth for upon his luſts?

Anſw. How to know when we pray to beſtow things on our luſts.

I anſwer, if a man conſult with his own heart, and deale impartially with himſelfe, hee may know what his ends are; but if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bils you bring in. What is the expence of the things *God* hath beſtowed on you, when hee hath put a *price into your hands*, conſider how you beſtow it. If a Steward have a great ſumme of money that his Maſter hath truſted him with, and his bills bee, that he hath beſtowed ſo much in riot, ſo much in fine apparell, &c. but there hath beene but ſo much beſtowed for his Maſters advantage, it is an argument he hath ſpent it ill: ſo when wee ſee there hath beene ſo much health ſpent, ſo much time, and ſo much ſtrength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly buſineſſe, without reſpect to *God*, not ſerving *God*, nor men in our calling, as we ſhould doe; and that there hath beene little time beſtowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with *God*, in taking pains with them from day to day; I ſay, if wee thus looke upon the bill of expence,

Simile.

pence, and conſider how wee have beſtowed our time, our health, our ſtrength, our wits, from day to day, and our diſcourſe (for that is one price that we have in our hands, by which we may doe good, it is as a Bucket by which wee may draw from others; and likewiſe it is as a ſpring, and fountaine, wherewith we may feed others, with the waters of life) conſider how we have laid out all theſe things, and by that we may know, how we are diſpoſed to uſe the bleſſings we ſeeke for at GODS hands, whether wee ſeeke them to beſtow them upon our luſts, or to ſpend thoſe gifts to our Maſters advantage; and, if wee finde wee doe it for our owne luſts; in this caſe I ſay to you goe and amend your prayers, and *God* will amend your ſpeeding. We muſt doe in this caſe, as an Angler doth when hee hath throwne the bait into the River, if it ſtay long, and catch nothing, hee takes up the bait, and amends it, and when hee ſees it well, hee then continues, and waites; in like manner muſt every one of us doe; if thou pray, and pray long, and haſt not obtained the thing thou praieſt for, look diligently to thy prayers, ſee whether they be right or no; if they be not, amend thy prayers, and *God* will amend his readineſſe to heare thee; if thou finde they be ſincere and hearty, mingled with holy deſires, and not with carnall and corrupt affections, then let the bait lye ſtill, that is, continue to pray, and to waite, and the *Lord* will come in due time.

Simile.

Simile.

But this is not all, though it be one maine thing

2 In respect of the manner, when they are uttered carelessely.

for besieds this, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed remissely, it is a common fault amongst us, when we succeed not in our praiers, we attribute it to many other things but not to our remisnesse & careleſnesse in seeking to GOD; if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sicknesse and weakenesse, and distemper of body, he thinkes that he hath eaten amisse, and considers not whether he hath prayed amisse; if a man have miscarried in his businesse, hee begins to thinke, whether he hath not beene improvident, whether he hath not dealt foolishly, whether hee hath not omitted such and such meanes, as hee might have used, hee never thinkes whether hee hath prayed amisse or no; when that (perhaps) is the cause of our miscarrying, and not the thing which we cõmonly attribute it unto: for though GOD be not the immediate cause, you know he is the great cause; *There is no ill, that hee hath not done*: that which moves him is alway either grace or sin; as that which moves him to doe us good, is our obedience to him; and that which moves him to the contrary, is neglect on our part.

What moves God to doe us good and evil.

Answ. 2. God grants our praiers oft times, yet,

First, not in that manner, as we desire.

But to answer further; suppose thy prayers be right, yet this is to bee considered, that oftentimes a man is deceived, in thinking his prayers are not heard; and therefore you must rectifie that misconceit. As for example, sometimes when wee would have the thing in one fashion, GOD bestowes the same thing upon us in another; and therefore thou maist bee deceived in that; it may bee, a man prayes earnestly, that hee

hee may have a ſtrong body, to doe GOD ſervice withall, when as, perhaps ſickneſſe of body makes him doe him better ſervice, becauſe it keepes him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly-minded. You know the caſe of *Paul*, hee would fain have had that luſt taken away that is ſpoken of, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. and why? ſurely the thing hee would have had, was, to have his heart in an holy and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had not his petition granted that way he looked for, yet hee had it another way, the *Lord* increaſed in him the grace of humility by it, hee ſaw his owne weakeneſſe, and the power of Chriſt the more; and when this was diſcovered unto him, he was content. 2 *Cor.* 12. 9.

Is it not all one, whether the *Lord* keepes an enemy from doing us hurt, or that he gives us a ſtrong helmet or buckler to keepe off the blow from wounding us? it may be a man prayes for money, and for eſtate; if *God* provide him meat and drinke, and cloathes ſufficiently, in ſtead of this, is it not all one? It may be another would have a greater degree of conveniency for his dwelling houſe, and many other things, if GOD give him a body able to endure that which is more courſe, all is one, as if hee were provided for more delicately. It is all one, whether a Phyſician quench the thirſt of his Patient, by giving him beere and drinke that is comfortable unto him, or by giving him Barberries, or ſomewhat elſe, that will doe the thing as well: and it is e- *Simile.* *Simile.*

quall to the childe whether the Nurſe feedes it with milke and other nouriſhment prepared for it, or gives it the breſt which it moſt deſireth: Even ſo it is all one to thee, whether the *Lord* anſwers thy petition, and gives thee the thing in the very ſelf-ſame manner that thou wouldeſt have it; or beſtowes it in another manner every whit as well, if not better for thee.

2. Not by thoſe meanes which we propound.

Secondly, as wee are deceived in the manner, ſo wee are deceived in the meanes oft times, in ſeeking to *God*. When a man prayes, he pitcheth upon ſuch a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; yet it may be the *Lord* will find out another way, that thou diddeſt never dreame of. *Paul* prayed to have a proſperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Ieruſalem*, and poſted up and downe from one priſon to another, God was now ſending him to *Rome*; yet he ſent him, and ſent him very ſafe with a great company attending upon him, he ſent him it maybe in a better manner than hee himſelfe would have gone, and yet it was by ſuch a meanes as he could never dreame of. Alſo you know *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian*, hee had pitched upon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would have ſurely *come forth, and have laid his hands upon him*; but to goe and waſh in *Iordan*, he thought his labour all loſt and his requeſt which hee made to the Prophet to no purpoſe; for it was a thing that hee never thought of, it was a weake and poore meanes that hee made no account of, yet that was the meanes

Inſtances.

meanes that *God* intended: ſo I ſay, wee oft deceive our ſelves, wee pitch upon ſuch particular wayes, and when theſe faile us, ſeeing that wee have prayed that theſe meanes might be uſed, and GOD doth not uſe them, wee thinke preſently it cannot be effected. *Ioſeph* thought verily *Pharoahs Steward* ſhould have been the meanes to bring the promiſe to paſſe, & after that, *Pharoahs Butler* he uſed as a meanes, when he deſired him to remember him; and yet all this was not the meanes, but another, which he never thought of, which was a dreame of *Pharoahs*: the like was in the caſe of *Mordecai*, deliverance came a ſtrange way, a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. So *Abraham* thought verily that *Iſmael* had beene the ſonne of the promiſe, but *God* tells him hee was deceived, *Iſaac* was the ſonne, in whom he would make good the promiſe. So the *Iſraelites* thought that *Moſes* ſhould have delivered them, that it ſhould have beene preſently true, that the yoke of bondage ſhould have immediately bin taken off from them; but wee ſee GOD went another way to worke, hee ſent *Moſes* away into a farre Country, and the bondage was exceedingly increaſed upon them; ſo that they thought they were further off now than ever they were before, but in truth they were neerer: for the increaſe of the bondage, increaſed *Pharoahs* ſinne, and made him ripe for deſtruction: Againe, it increaſed the peoples humility, it made them to pray harder, and to cry more fervently to GOD for deliverance, and ſo it made them more fit for it; and

and *Moſes* at the laſt was more fitted to bee a deliverer after hee was ſo long trained up, and was ſo much humbled; ſo that when GOD ſeemes to us to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is his next way to bring it to paſſe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with us, wee pitch upon a certaine particular meanes, wee thinke ſuch a man muſt doe it, or ſuch a courſe muſt doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing leſſe. And the reaſon often is, becauſe if wee ſhould have deliverance, many times by ſuch meanes, by ſuch men, and by ſuch wayes, wee would attribute too much to the meanes. Therefore, wee ſee, while *Gideon* had a great Army the Lord would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore wee ſee to what a ſmall number hee brought it: ſo oft-times men thinke, oh if I had ſuch a mans helpe, or if I had ſuch a meanes, it would doe the thing, the enterpriſe would be brought to paſſe: when we make too much account of it, the *Lord* (it may bee) caſts away that, which ſeemed moſt probable, and (even as he doth moſt of his workes, as hee builds his owne Kingdome by the moſt fooliſh and improbable meanes of all other, ſo) often hee doth our buſineſſe by ſuch meanes, that wee leaſt dreame of: therefore bee not diſcouraged. Suppoſe we pray, that ſuch a great Prince ſhould raiſe the Churches, that ſuch a warre, that ſuch an enterpriſe, and proje& may doe it; put the caſe the *Lord* will not doe it ſo, are wee then preſently undone? and is there no helpe, becauſe ſuch a battaile

Wee attribute too much to meanes.

battaile is overthrowne, becauſe ſuch a King did not ſucceed, becauſe ſuch a Generall had not ſucceſſe according to onr expectation? It may bee that is not the way, the *Lord* will helpe the Church after another manner, than wee dreame of; and ſo for a mans ſelfe, he hath a great buſineſſe to bee done, or hee is in diſtreſſe, and would have deliverance, and hee thinkes this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earneſt to have it done: now it is good, in this caſe, to leave it to the LORD, to make our requeſts knowne to him; and when we have done that, to bee no further carefull, but leave it to the *Lord*, to doe it his owne way; for he is moſt skilfull.

Simile.

If you take a skilfull Workeman, and ſay no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you, doe mee ſuch a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the ſetting up of a building, it may bee, hee will goe a way to worke, that thou knoweſt not what it meanes, and yet thou wilt truſt him: why then wilt thou not truſt GOD, and ſuffer him to goe his owne way? for when thou art croſſed in that thing, wherein (it may bee) of all others, thou wouldeſt not be croſſed, perhaps that ſame is the beſt way of all other, to bring the thing to paſſe that thou deſireſt.

Thirdly, or not in our time.

Thirdly, as wee are deceived in the manner, and the meanes, ſo likewiſe wee miſtake the time: it may bee the *Lord* is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time that thou wouldeſt have him. When a man prayes to bee delivered

vered from ſuch trouble, from ſuch a diſtreſſe and affliction, hee thinkes the time very long, and ſaith, hee is not heard, becauſe hee is not delivered preſently: wee would all have the ſmarting plaiſter preſently tooke off; but the LORD is wiſer than wee, (as the Phyſician knowes what belongs to the Patient better than himſelfe) though hee doe it not preſently, yet hee will doe it in his good time. Therefore ſay not, thou art not heard, thou muſt take heed of taking delayes for denyals, the *Lord* will deferre to doe the thing, yet hee will doe it, and doe it in the beſt ſeaſon: for this is a generall rule, *Gods time is the beſt time.* When thou commeſt to pray for a thing, thou wouldeſt have it done preſently, and thou thinkeſt it is the beſt time, all the controverſie betweene GOD, and thee is, which is the fitteſt time to have it done, thou thinkeſt perhaps preſently; God againe (it may bee) will doe it a yeere hence; ſurely he is the beſt chooſer and wee ſhall finde it ſo; and therefore be content to wait his leaſure: For hee may have many ends in deferring it, it may bee to try thy faith, (as hee did the faith of the *Canaanite*, whom therefore hee would not heare;) it may be to increaſe thy holines, to put thy heart into a better temper, and therefore he deferres longer. Hee meant to doe that for *Iacob*, that hee did, yet hee ſuffered *Iacob* to *wraſtle all night*, and yet hee would not doe it till the inſtant of the morning appeared: ſo it was with *Daniel*, the anſwer

Simile.

Wee muſt not take Gods delayes for denyals.

Note.

Why God deferres to anſwer us.

Note.

ſwer went forth when hee began to pray, yet hee would have him inſtant, and continue in prayer; ſo (I ſay) the *Lord* may have many ends why hee deferres, let us therefore bee content to take his owne time.

Laſt of all, conſider this when thou ſeekeſt to the *Lord*, to have any thing done, it is poſſible that it may croſſe ſome other paſſage of his providence; and in this place thou ſhouldeſt be content to be denied.

Anſw. 3. Our prayers may croſſe ſome paſſage of Gods providence.

But, you will ſay, why may not both bee accommodated?

Object.

I anſwer, ſo they ſhall, though thou ſee not how; for it is not with *God*, as it is with man: if a man doe a good turne to one, two being earneſt petitioners whoſe well-being wholly depends on the ſucceſſe, hee muſt needs doe an ill turne to another; but *God* compoſeth all for the beſt. As for example, *David* deſired exceedingly to build a Temple; yet the *Lord* had another end, for hee had reſolved in his providence to make *Salomon* the builder of it, which indeede was much better for *David*: for what more than hee had could *David* have gotten, if he had done it? ſeeing the *Lord* gave him as full a reward, as if he had done it: for he tels him, that for that purpoſe of building GOD an houſe, he would build him an houſe: ſo that *David* had his end to the full, though *Salomon* did build the Temple. In like manner in the Land of *Canaan* amongſt the *Iſraelites* the *Lord* kept the *Canaanites* but it was for their profit to exerciſe them, and keepe them in feare,

Anſw.

Simile.

feare, leſt at any time they ſhould forget him. So alſo we finde by experience, there are ſome paſſages of GODS providence, that if wee knew, we would willingly yeeld to, in that it were better, that it ſhould be ſo, than other wiſe; and therefore it is better, in ſome caſe, that we ſhould bee denyed.

***

FINIS.

THE

THE THIRD SERMON.

1 Thes. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NOw wee proceede to that which remaines; for ſomething more wee may adde to the demonſtrating the time of *Gods* granting our petitions, and the meaſure of ſatisfying them, which we touched a little before. See page 59.

For the time; wee are deceived in that wee thinke, when *God* deferres he denies; for many times *God* deferres for ſpeciall reaſons, and yet he grants the requeſts, in the fitteſt time for us, as the Phyſician knowes the fitteſt time to give the Patient phyſicke of one kind or another; and in this *Simile.*

this wee muſt yeeld to *God*; as hee doth all his workes in the fitteſt time, ſo hee grants our petitions in the fitteſt time; there is an appointed time for any deliverance to bee granted, for any bleſſing, for any comfort that wee need, and expect from his hands. Now, if our ſelves did rightly ſee it, wee would have things done for us in the moſt inconvenient time, wee would have the ſmarting plaiſter pulled off, before the wound be healed, wheras it is beſt for us to have it kept on: *Beloved*, you ſhall finde, that *God* divides between *Satan* and us, in this caſe, as we ſee *Revel.* 2. 10. *Satan ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, and you ſhall be there for tenne dayes:* it was not ſo long as Satan would have had it, it may be, he would have had it tenne and ten too; nor againe, it was not ſo ſhort as *God* would have had it, but *God* ſets downe the time betweene them both: and therefore we muſt reſt upon him, and thinke that many times there is great reaſon, why we ſhould be deferred, when we aske things at his hands. Now you ſhall find *God* deferres for one of theſe cauſes, for the moſt part:

Simile.

Revel. 2. 10.

Note.

Foure reaſons of Gods deferring to grant our requeſts.

1 To try our faith.

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith, as wee ſee, he deferred to grant to the woman of *Canaan*, although he did meane to grant her requeſt, yet hee deferred long, that he might put her to the tryall; and you ſee, ſhee was no loſer by it, but when ſhe held out in her prayers, ſhe had her requeſt granted to the full.

2 To humble us more.

Sometimes, hee defer es to grant it, that wee may be more humbled; as you know, *Paul* praied earneſtly

earnestly, but *God* told him, that hee would deferre him, because he needed more humility: so he deferred to grant the request, that the men of *Israel* put up to him against *Benjamin*, when the cause was just, and *God* intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twice, though they fasted and prayed; his end was, as we see in the Text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might bee more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

3 To enable us to use his blessings when we have them.

Againe, sometimes *God* deferres, that we might be more able to use those blessings that he means to bestow upon us: so he deferred to raise *Ioseph* to preferment; so hee deferred to bring *David* to the Kingdome; that those afflictions that they endured might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperity, as he had provided for them afterwards.

4 To make us to prize his blessings. *Simile.*

And lastly, he defers, that he might set a higher price upon his blessings, that hee might inhaunce the price of them; as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more: so God with-holds his blessings, that wee might have a greater edge set upon our desires, that wee might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when we have obtained them.

Concerning the measure, if God gives us not so much as we aske.

Now, as he doth thus for the time, and as wee are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denyals; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure: many times GOD grants the things that wee would have, but because wee have

have not ſo large a meaſure as we expect; therefore wee thinke we have it not at all, and that the *Lord* hath denyed us our prayers, when indeed hee hath not; for a leſſer meaſure, many times, may ſerve as well as a greater: as GOD ſaith to *Paul, My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Though the temptation doe abide upon us, if there bee ſufficient grace to keepe us in a continuall conflict, and warre againſt it, if there be ſufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to uphold, and to comfort us in it, it is enough, it may bring us to heaven; wee have a deliverance from it, even when wee ſeeme not to be delivered, though wee have not ſo full a victory, as wee would have, yet that grace may be ſufficient.

A leſſe meaſure may ſerve as well as a greater. Cleared in Inſtances. 1 Wealth. *Pſal.* 37. 16.

You ſhall ſee this almoſt in all the things wee have occaſion to requeſt at GODS hands, that a leſſer meaſure may ſerve as well as a greater. Take it firſt in outward things.

A little wealth may ſerve as well as great revenues, as in *Pſal.* 37. 16. *A little that the righteous hath, is better than the great revenues of the wicked:* becauſe a little, when GOD ſhall fill it with his bleſſings, it ſhall ſerve the turne as well; but, if a man hath great revenues, and *God* blowes upon them, and leaves an emptineſſe in them; if a man have great revenues, if hee have great outward comforts, yet if there be an emptines, if there be a vanity in them, if they be as the huske without the graine, as the ſhell without the kernell, as they are often; though there be a great bulke, and they ſeeme very fit to comfort us, yet they will

Simile.

will doe us little good; whereas a little, on the other ſide, with *Gods* bleſſing, will do much good: for in this caſe it is as 'twas with *Manna*, *Thoſe that had little, had ſufficient, and thoſe that gathered over, had never a whit the more*; that is, for their uſe and comfort. You know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nouriſhed and ſtrengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meat, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kind, may ſerve as well as much.

2 Inſtance, in grace.

And ſo likewiſe, a little grace may be ſo uſed, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much, it may preſerve you from ſinning againſt GOD, as well as a great meaſure. For the confirmation of this, looke to *Rev.* 3. 8. which is a notable place for this purpoſe: it is ſaid there to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Thou haſt a little ſtrength*; they had but a little ſtrength, and yet you ſee there what that little ſtrength did: *Thou haſt but a little ſtrength, and yet thou haſt kept my Word, and haſt not denyed my Name.* There were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his Word, and to be kept from running out to the deniall of his Name, and committing other ſins: now the little ſtrength they had, was ſufficient for theſe ends. So that we ſee, he findes no fault with that Church; other Churches, that had more ſtrength, it may be, they fell into greater ſinnes. But this is a rule which is true, you will find it true in all obſervations through the Scriptures, That ſometimes thoſe that have great grace, notwithſtanding fall into great ſinnes, they may be ſubject to ſome

Revel. 3. 8.

Thoſe that have more grace may fall, when weake ones ſtand.

ſtrong prevailing luſt; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, wee ſee, he was ſubject to great ſinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may have but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be ſo ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from ſinne, more than the other. This muſt be warily underſtood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes than the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary courſe, to reſiſt greater temptations, more than leſſe grace; but yet, (I ſay for our comfort, that) though a man have but a little ſtrength, as it is ſaid in the place newly mentioned, *Rev.* 3. in that little ſtrength, *I have ſet a doore open to thee*: it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, ſo that no man could ſhut it.

Note in what ſenſe this is to be taken.

Revel. 3.

And as we ſay of grace, ſo likewiſe for gifts; ſmaller gifts, meaner gifts may ſerve the turne many times, as well as greater gifts: for (you know) a little finger, a ſmall hand, may ſerve to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and (it may be) will doe it better; for in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of functions, and meaner gifts may ſerve for the diſcharge of ſome operations, of ſome ſervices for the Church as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of functions, ſo there are variety of members, ſome ſtronger, ſome weaker, and the weaker may ſerve, in ſome caſes, as well as the ſtronger; a little Barke may doe better in a ſmall river, than a greater Ship; ſo a man that hath

3 Inſtance in gifts.

Simile.

Simile.

hath but meane gifts, may ſerve meane capacities, as well as greater and better: and therefore thinke not that things are denied, when the thing is granted, not in ſuch a meaſure as wee deſire. Laſtly, to be faithfull in a little gift, will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater. *Thou haſt bin faithfull in little*, may *make* a man *ruler over much*, & may bring a great increaſe of the *talents* after: Therefore let not a man be diſcouraged, if he have not ſo great a meaſure as others have.

Faithfulneſſe in little brings as great a reward as in more.

So likewiſe if a man deſire patience & ſtrength to goe thorow all variety of conditions, thorow all the troubles he meets with: as ſometimes the *Lord* layes a great burthen upon a mans ſhoulders, and gives him great ſtrength to beare it; ſometimes againe he gives but a little ſtrength, and then hee proportions the burthen to it; for is it not all one, whether the burthen bee great, and the ſtrength anſwerable, or the burthen be leſſe, and the ſtrength little? Sometimes hee takes away calamity quite, ſometimes he layes it upon a man, and gives him as much ſtrength as enables him to beare it, and that is as good as if it were removed; elſe, what is the meaning of that, *You ſhall have an hundred fold with perſecution*, but that you ſhall have ſo much joy and ſtrength in perſecution, that it ſhall be all one as if you wanted it? So wee ſee *Heb.* 5. 7. when Chriſt prayed for deliverance, in that great houre of triall, the Text ſaith, *Hee was heard in the things hee feared*; and yet, we ſee, the cup did not paſſe from him, but onely hee was ſtrengthened to beare it,

4 Inſtance, in croſſes and afflictions. *Simile.*

Heb. 5. 7.

Note.

and ſo it is in this caſe. All which may ſerve for a full anſwer to that, that wee be not miſtaken in judging our prayers not to bee heard, when they are heard.

Dangers of omitting, or neglecting prayer.

And now, *Beloved*, what remaines but that we ſet our ſelves to the duty, to doe that we are exhorted unto heere, namely to *Pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keep at leaſt a conſtant courſe in it; for firſt, if we doe neglect it, we doe but robbe *God* of his mercies, we take them without his leave.

1

2 Againe, we are guilty of the ſinne of unthankfulneſſe: for we ought to *give thankes in all things*.

3 Beſides, we neglect his worſhip; for you know prayer is a part of his worſhip, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worſhip and ſervice we owe unto him.

4 And moreover, we doe not only ſuffer ſinne to lye unforgiven, which is very dangerous, but alſo

5 wee deprive our ſelves of bleſſings, and bring a

6 curſe upon us; nay wee ſuffer our hearts to grow hard, and to be diſtempered: for from our neglect of prayer comes that deadneſſe of ſpirit, that worldly mindedneſſe, and unaptneſſe to pray, to heare the word, and to keep the Sabbath: for what elſe is the reaſon, why thoſe that have beene forward and zealous profeſſours, in former times, have loſt their light, and fallen from their place; I ſay, what is the reaſon of it, when they were ſometimes *fervent in ſpirit ſerving the Lord*? but becauſe that fire was not kept alive with the fuel of prai-

Why men decline in their graces.

er;

er; and when they declined from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you ſhall finde that it did commonly ariſe from remiſneſſe in this duty. Therefore we ſay to ſuch, *Repent, and amend, and doe your firſt workes*; that is, uſe your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace and ſtrength againe: therefore take heed of being negligent, and remiſſe in this duty. Wee have great cauſe to be encouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that we make ſhalbe loſt, but they come up into remembrance. And therfore you muſt conſider with your ſelves, not onely what you doe for the preſent, but what ſtocke of prayers you have laid up. You know, a man may have much in bils and bonds, as well as in preſent mony; ſo there is a certaine ſtocke of prayer, a certaine treaſure laid up, that ſhall not be forgotten. The husbandman lookes not only upon the graine that he hath in his garner, but hee lookes upon that which is ſowne, though it be out of his hand, yea, he reckons that the better of the two; ſo thoſe prayers that have beene ſowne, (it may be, many yeeres agoe) are ſuch as will bring in a ſure increaſe. Therefore let us be exhorted to be conſtant in this duty, to be frequent therein, to *continue in it, watching thereto with perſeverance.*

Benifit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is loſt.

Simile.

Simile.

And now wee have diſpatched this wee will come to anſwer ſome caſes of conſcience that fal out in the performance of this duty, which are divers:

Nine caſes of conſcience concerning prayer.

Firſt, that is one; What ſhall a man judge of

Caſe 1.

About wandring thoughts in prayer.

his prayers, when they are accompanied with wandring thoughts, whether thoſe prayers are ſuch as *God* wholly refuſeth, or what he is to doe in ſuch a caſe, when hee is ſubject to wandring thoughts, to vanity of minde, and diſtemper in the performance of that duty?

Anſw.

To this I anſwer, that wee muſt diſtinguiſh of the cauſe whence theſe wandring thoughts ariſe.

1 The cauſe of them is weakneſſe.

Sometimes they ariſe, not ſo much from our owne neglect, as from weakneſſe, from temptation; and in ſuch a caſe GOD layes them not ſo much to our charge. As for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his beſt to hit the marke, yet, if hee hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the palſey in it, or if one jogge him while he is about it, the fault was not ſo much in him, it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weakneſſe, or it is an impediment caſt in by another: ſo it is in this caſe, this wandring of mind proceeds from a naturall infirmity and imbecility that hangs upon the nature of man, which is not ſo able to keep it ſelfe cloſe to ſuch a ſpirituall buſineſſe: and this *God* conſiders, for hee is wiſe, and *knowes that wee are but fleſh*. When a weake ſervant goes about a buſineſſe, though hee doe it not ſo well as a ſtronger, yet a man is wiſe to conſider, that the ſervant is but weake: in like manner the *Lord* conſiders the naturall weakneſſe that we are ſubject unto, and he deales mercifully with us, in ſuch a caſe: for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

his

his hand, but he hath a palsey-arme, and therfore he cannot keep it steddy, though he have a mind to doe it.

So also in the other case is it, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Satan interrupts him, who is alwaies diligent to hinder him in such a duty; in this case, *God* chargeth it not upon him, neither doth he cast us off, nor reject our prayers because of that. 2 Temptation.

But on the other side, when this wandring of mind shall rise frō meere negligence on our part, from profanenesse, from want of reverence, because we doe not intend holy duties as we ought, we come not to them with that conscionablenes, with that carefulnesse as we should doe; in this case it is a great sinne, and this moves the *Lord* to anger, when we performe that duty in that manner, when wee doe not so much as set our selves about it with our strength, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance. 3 Negligence.

Or secondly, when we our selves be the cause of it, by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffering our selves to be worldly minded, by suffering an indisposition to grow upon us, and not laboring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good that is played upon it, yet it is unpleasant, because the instrumēt is out of tune; and whose fault is that? So, when thou commest to GOD, and sufferest thy heart to bee distempered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sin, as well as thy profanenesse and 4 Voluntary admitting of vain thoughts.

Simile.

and neglect in the very time of the performance.

And by this you may learne, how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty, and likewiſe you may ſee how to prevent them. The way to prevent them, is firſt, to keepe our hearts in tune before, to have them ready, as *the wiſe man hath his heart at his right hand*; that is, he hath it ready when he hath it to uſe. When a man is to uſe his horſe, he doth not ſuffer him to runne up and downe in the paſtures wildely, but will have him under bridle; ſo we ſhould keepe our hearts in frame, that they may be ready to do us ſervice in ſuch an holy duty, when wee have need of them.

How to prevent wandring thoughts in prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, we muſt be diligent, when we come to performe the duty, that though our minds do wander, yet we may be ready to recall them preſently, to ſet our ſelves to it with all diligence. So much for anſwering this firſt caſe.

Caſe 2. About indiſpoſednes, and dulneſſe, and unaptneſſe to prayer.

The ſecond Caſe is, what a man is to do, when hee findes a great indiſpoſition to prayer, ſuch a dulneſſe and deadneſſe in him, that hee knowes not how to goe about the duty, and he thinkes, if he doe it, it were as good be undone.

Anſw.

To this I anſwer briefly, that in all ſuch caſes, a man is bound notwithſtanding to performe it, let his heart bee never ſo much out of temper, let there be never ſo great a dulneſſe, and deadneſſe of ſpirit upon him, yet he is bound to doe it.

Obiect.

But you will ſay, Why, but I am altogether unfit.

Anſw.

I anſwer, That a man by ſetting himſelfe upon the

the worke ſhall gather a fitneſſe, though he were unfit at the firſt. You know, members that are benummed, yet by uſing them, they get life and heat, and come, in the end, to be nimble enough; ſo it is with the heart, in this caſe, when it is benummed, the very uſing of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood, though it be greene, yet if it be long blowed, at the length it will be dry, and take fire, ſo it is with the heart, a man may be long about getting it on the wing, yet with much adoe he may do it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty in ſuch a caſe; yea, ſo much the rather, becauſe there is never more need of calling upon GOD, than at ſuch time: for then a man lyes moſt expoſed to temptation, then, if any ſinne come, he is ready to be overtaken with it, he is unfit for any thing: and therefore, if ever he have need to call upon *God*, it is at that time.

Simile.

Simile.

Never more need to pray, than when we are moſt indiſpoſed.

Note.

But you will ſay, It may be GOD will not accept it.

Object.

I anſwer briefly, Although a mans heart be ſo indiſpoſed, that when hee hath done all hee can, yet hee can get no life, hee can get no heat in the performance of ſuch a duty, yet *God* may accept that prayer, as wel as that which is moſt fervent. And that you may underſtand this aright, you muſt take it with this diſtinctiou: for alwayes this dulneſſe and deadneſſe in praier, comes from one of theſe two cauſes.

Anſw.

Cauſes of dulneſſe.

One is, when *God* withdrawes his owne Spirit, that is, withdrawes not his ſpirit altogether; (for there may be an helpe, when wee perceive it not,

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not) but when he withdrawes the livelineſſe, and quickneſſe of his ſpirit; and in this caſe, if we doe our duty, if wee doe the beſt wee can, the *Lord* doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchſafed ſuch inlargement of our hearts, though hee hath not powred out his ſpirit upon us, in the performance of the duty, as at other times, but he gives a ſecret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor peradventure is ſo great as at other times; yet I ſay, when it ariſeth from his own withdrawing of that fitneſſe, and wee our ſelves are not negligent (which is the other cauſe) but endeavor as much as we can to doe our beſt, in this caſe *God accepteth the wil for the deed*; as I have often ſaid to you that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is ſuch as wee cannot remove, when the dulneſſe of ſpirit is ſuch as it is not in our power to remove it, though we have uſed our utmoſt diligence, in that caſe it is no hindrance. And therefore it is a great comfort unto us that we have uſed our diligence in this duty, and have imployed our beſt ſtrength to quicken our hearts, though it be not done, yet GOD accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

From negligence.

When indiſpoſition is no hindrance.

Caſe 3. About praying after a man hath committed ſome groſſe ſinne.

The next caſe is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed ſome great ſinne, after he hath wounded his conſcience; whether then, notwithſtanding hee muſt come, and keepe his conſtant courſe in praying, morning and evening; whether he ſhalbe ſo bold, as to come into *Gods* preſence, after he hath ſo exceedingly offended him?

To

To this I anſwer, that a man is bound (notwithſtanding any ſinne that he hath committed, be it what it will bee,) to keepe this courſe conſtantly in prayer, and not to omit it, not to keepe off, not to deferre it. And my ground for it is, becauſe this is a duty, it is a charge that *God* hath laid upon all, to *Pray continually*; that is, at the leaſt twice a day, as we ſhewed before, to keepe a conſtant courſe in it. Now it is certain, our failing in one thing muſt not excuſe us in another: when the duty lies on us, wee have no diſpenſation to be negligent in it; and therefore wee are bound to doe it.

Anſw. In this caſe, prayer is not to be neglected.

Reaſon 1. It is Gods command.

Note.

Againe, conſider this, that a particular offence doth not offend ſo much, as if we grow ſtrangers to GOD, as if wee grow to a generall rebellion againſt him. As, put the caſe, a child commits a great offence againſt his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers houſe, and grow a ſtranger to him, that is more than the particular offence: for a generall rebellion muſt needs be more than the particular. And to give over calling upon *God*, to breake of that courſe, to grow a ſtranger to him, to runne away from his houſe, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, and a conſtant courſe of obedience to him, this is a generall rebellion, and is worſe than the particular; yea ſuch a carriage, after ſinne committed, moves GOD to anger more than the ſinne it ſelfe: as many times, the contemptuous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moves a maſter, a husband, or a parent more than the particular

Reaſon 2. Neglect in this is worſe than the ſinne wee committed before.

ticular failing though it were exceeding great.

Reason 3. It leaves the breach in the conscience open.

Besides, consider when a man commits a great sinne, hee makes a great gappe in his conscience, he makes a great breach there; and will you have that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that are in the heart to steale out? I will give you but one instance for this: You see, S. *Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because he came in presently, and repented, and sought for pardon, (as you know he did,) hee was graciously preserved from running into further arrerages; for hee made up the gappe, he made up the breach by his true repentance.

If we recover not quickly out of a sinne, we adde more to it.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come unto *God*, as he should have done, to keepe his ordinary course in sacrificing unto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes hee fell into. And likewise that was the case of *Salomon*; you know, to what a height he grew, by not comming to *God*, at his first failing: And therefore, I say, there is reason, that we should doe it; though the sinne be never so great, wee ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

Quest. But may I not stay till I bee more fitted, till my heart bee more softened, and more humbled?

Answ. Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for the

the heart commonly growes more hard in ſin by continuance; the conſcience is more tender immediately after the ſinne is committed, than it is afterwards; and when thou ſtayeſt for more humility, thou findeſt leſſe: And therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly hold, it is then beſt to quench it, before the wound be feſtered, before it hath continued long; for the heart will grow worſe and worſe, as it is *Heb.* 3. 12. *Take heed that you be not hardned through the deceitfulneſſe of ſinne.* The meaning is this, when you commit a ſinne, you thinke, if you ſtay a weeke, or a fortnight, or a moneth, you ſhall come in as well as at the firſt; no, ſaith the Apoſtle, *While it is to day* come in, that is, doe it preſently, for ſin will deceive you, it will harden your heart before you be aware, it will make a diſtance between *God* and you, it will take you off from him, it will leade you further on: and therefore take heed, that your hearts be not hardened through the deceitfulneſſe of ſin, that ſinne doe not deceive you, which it will doe before you thinke of it. And therefore in this caſe you ſhould do as you do with waters; when waters breake out a little, it is beſt to ſtop them preſently, if you ſuffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length you bee unable to ſtop them; ſo in this caſe, when you have committed a great ſin, come in ſpeedily, before the wound grow incurable.

Staying for fitneſſe after ſin committed, we become more unfit.

Heb. 3. 12.

Simile.

But you will ſay, What ſhall a man come into *Gods* preſence, who is moſt holy, after he hath defiled

Obiect.

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filed himſelfe with ſome great ſinne; is not this an unreverent thing?

Anſw. We muſt come to God with a diſpoſition turned from ſinne.

I anſwer briefly, it is very true, if thou be bold to come into *Gods* preſence with the ſame diſpoſition wherewith the ſinne was committed, with a minde ſo faſhioned, and ſo framed, in that caſe thou doſt exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of profaneneſſe: and therefore, when wee ſay, thou muſt come in, and keepe a conſtant courſe in prayer notwithſtanding, the meaning is, you muſt come in with a diſpoſition turned aſide from your ſinnes, and brought home to GOD, with a minde to abhorre that which is evill, and to cleave to that which is good, there muſt bee this converſion of the minde to him, thou muſt not come in with the ſame diſpoſition, that muſt be altered. So much ſhall ſerve for the anſwer to this caſe.

Caſe 1. About a ſet forme of prayer.

Another caſe is, whether wee may uſe a ſet forme of prayer; and likewiſe whether it be ſufficient?

Anſw.

I need not ſay much to you, for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a ſet forme of prayer may be uſed: you know, Chriſt preſcribed a forme, you know, there were certaine *Pſalmes* that were prayers, that were uſed conſtantly; and therefore there is no doubt but that a ſet forme may be uſed, for we have thoſe and other examples for it: And in the Church, at all times, both in the primitive times, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to *Luther* and *Calvins* time, ſtill in all times the Church had

had set formes they used, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this:

Object.

That in stinted prayer the spirit is straitned, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall have his spirit (as it were) bounded and limited, that he cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed; and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should be left to more liberty, (as hee is in conceived prayers,) and not tyed to a strict forme.

Answ. 1. They that object against a set forme of prayer, do the same thing.

To this I answer, even those men that are against this, and that use this reason, they doe the same thing daily in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him that heares it; I say, it is a forme to him: for put the case, that he which is an hearer, and doth attend another praying, suppose that his spirit be more inlarged, it is a straitning to him, hee hath no liberty to goe out, he is bound to keepe his minde intent upon that which the other prayeth: And therefore, if that were a sufficient reason, that a man might not use a set forme, becaus the spirit is straitned, a man should not heare another pray (though it be a conceived prayer) becaus, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may bee, the hearer hath a larger heart (a great deale) than hee that speakes and prayes; so that there is a bounding, and straitning, and a limiting of the spirit to him. And therefore that reason cannot be good.

Note.

Answ. 2. Wee have liberty at other times.

Againe, I answer, though the spirit be limited, at that time in publike, yet he hath a liberty at other

ther times, to pray as freely as he will in private; and therefore he is not so tied, but though at that time in the congregation he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediately after, he may be as free as he will in secret.

Answ. 3. The spirit is not restrained in a set forme of prayer.

Againe, I answer, it is not a bond, or restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largenesse of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though he be tyed in words, yet there is not a tye upon the affection, that may bee extended more, in putting up the same petition, when another mans is more straitned: therfore there is no tye, and limit upon that. And this is enough to satisfie that case, that a set forme of prayer must be used.

Quest. Though a set forme may be used in prayer, yet that alone is not sufficient.

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient? whether a man may thinke, if he have beene present at publike Prayer, (which is a commendable and religious thing to use constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient?

Answ.

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what wee ought to doe in this case, for we may be deceived in it; and I answer plainly, It is not sufficient: A man that is diligent in publike prayers, that keepes them morning and evening, if hee thinkes now hee hath discharged his duty, he is in a very great errour: and this is the reason, because they are not sufficient. Indeed they ought to be used constantly, for *God* is worshipped in thē; & it is a more divine worship; for when

when GOD is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many spectators, more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour, which is when men joyne in this worship. Many other reasons might bee produced for it, but that is not the thing, I am now upon, to commend it to you; but I say, it is not sufficient, although it ought to bee done, because there are many particular sinnes, which cannot bee confessed in publike prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publike prayer you cannot unfold, and open, or expresse unto the *Lord*.

Simile.

5 Reasons proving that a set forme of prayer is not sufficient.

Reason 1.

Againe, the end of a set forme of prayer is to be an helpe for the private, (for the publike it is another case) a helpe that one may use that is yet exceeding weake: a child, that cannot goe, may have a prop to helpe it, but wee must not alway be children, we must not alway use that helpe.

Reason 2.

Simile.

Besides, we must consider this, that there is no man that hath any worke of grace in his heart, but he is enabled in some measure to pray, without a set forme of prayer, hee is able to expresse his desires to *God* in private, one way or other: There was never any man in any extreme want, but hee knew how to expresse himselfe, where he had liberty to speake; so it is in this case.

Reason 3.

Besides, the spirit of a man hath greater liberty in private; there a man may *powre forth his soule to the Lord*, as *Hanna* saith, 1 *Sam.* 1. which in publike hee cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which hee hath cause to bee thankefull to *God* for.

Reas. 4.

1 Sam. 1.

Reaſon 5.

Beſides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which in the publike common petitions, he is not able to doe: for, *Beloved*, know this, that the prayer which is required from day to day, is not ſo much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keepe the heart in order; for if ſinfull luſts grow upon it, and diſtempers, and worldly mindedneſſe, the end of this duty is to worke them out againe, to renew repentance againe; and when there is a forgetfulneſſe of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good deſires begin to languiſh, to renew, and recover them, to put fuell to them: and this is not done by the performance of the publike onely. And therefore, I ſay, though you performe it in your families, and meet in the Congregation, you muſt not thinke that this is enough, for you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

The end why prayer is uſed.

Caſe 5. About uſing the voyce, and about the geſture in ſecret prayer.

Againe, this is another Caſe, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether he be bound alwayes to uſe his voyce? whether hee bee bound alwayes to ſuch a kinde of geſture?

Anſw.

I anſwer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in theſe things, and therefore I paſſe them over) for the geſture in publike, there is more heed to bee taken of that, becauſe it is a publike and open worſhip of GOD; and therefore in publike the geſture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the Old Teſtament

ſtament eſpecially) that they *bowed downe, and worſhipped*, and ſo *Chriſt* looked up to heaven, *Paul kneeled downe*, and the reſt with him, and prayed; and many ſuch like expreſſions you have mentioned in the Scriptures: where you have prayer mentioned in publike, ſtill you ſhall find an expreſſion of ſome reverent geſture; therefore when wee appeare before the *Lord* in the publike performance of this duty, eſpeciall care muſt bee taken hereunto. In the private, the caſe is different, there variety of geſtures may be uſed, and I do not ſee but al manner of geſtures may be uſed; there are many examples for walking, and lying, and ſitting; onely this is to be taken heed to, that even in private, as farre as may be, the geſture bee ſuch, as may both expreſſe the inward reverence in the heart; for elſe of the outward man, I ſee not but there is a liberty in that: And indeed I think this is the beſt rule in private, that that geſture be uſed, that doth moſt quicken, & doth help the duty moſt. Some geſture may bring a dulneſſe, and indiſpoſition, when another may quicken the body, & make it more fit for prayer: ſometimes lying is inconvenient, and ſometimes more convenient: And therefore, in this caſe, the beſt rule is to uſe that geſture, which quickens moſt, which helps moſt the duty. Some geſtures may breed a wearineſſe in the body, ſome may breed a dulneſſe; ſome are painfull to the body: all this is a hindrance to the duty, when as the change of it may quicken and helpe it forward.

Note.

That geſture is to be uſed in private prayer that doth moſt quicken.

Now for the voyce, I ſay, for that, (as for the

geſture) it is not ſimply required: for *God is a ſpirit, and he will be worſhipped in ſpirit*. Men that have eares, and bodies, they muſt have men ſpeake to them: but *God*, that is a Spirit, delights in that which is like himſelfe; and therefore all his eye is upon the inward behaviour of the Spirit. Beſides, the ſpirit may ſpeak to *God*, when the voyce doth not; as, you know, the *Angels* ſpeake to *God*, and they ſpeake one to another. The Schoolmen have great diſputes about the ſpeech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* ſpeakes to another after this manner: When any one hath a conceit in his mind of any thing, with a will that another ſhould underſtand it, & that *God* ſhould underſtand it, that is enough for the expreſſion of it; ſo is it with the ſpirit of man, when hee hath ſuch a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a deſire in his will, that *God* ſhould underſtand that petition, that is an offering it up to the *Lord*; it is as true a ſpeaking to the *Lord*, as when you deliver it by an outward voyce, for the ſpirit agrees with the *Angels*, ſo farre as it is a ſpirit, and as they ſpeake one to another, and to the *Lord*; ſo doth the ſpirit of man; though indeed the tongue be to be uſed, as it is ſaid *Iam.* 3. 9. *Therewith bleſſe wee God*, and therewith ſhould wee pray among others, and before others, and ſpeake before others: but when there is any cauſe to uſe the voyce in private, it is this, as farre as it may quicken the heart, (as I ſay of geſture) and as farre as thereby wee may keepe our thoughts from wandring. If the voice were not uſed, perhaps

Iohn 4. 24.

Angels how they ſpeake to God, and one another.

Iames 3. 9.

Why the voice is uſed in praier.

haps the thoughts would bee subject to more wandring, and wee should not be ready to take notice of them, but they would slip before wee are aware; and therefore when the voyce is used, it must be to keepe in the thoughts. In some cases, to omit the voyce is more convenient, when it may draw any other inconveniencie; but that is left to every mans particular case, as hee shall find the use of it to hinder him, or further him. And so much shall serve for this Case.

FINIS.

THE FOURTH SERMON.

1 Thes. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

Case 6. About want of leiſure to pray by reaſon of preſent buſineſſes to bee ſpeedily diſpatched.

ANother Caſe of conſcience in the buſineſſe of prayer is, what a man is to doe, when he is in a ſtrait of time, by reaſon of ſome weighty buſineſſe, that requires a quicke and ſudden diſpatch, and gives him not the leiſure and liberty, that otherwiſe hee might have had?

To this I anſwer, you ſhall find, that in Scriptures the prayers of Saints have been ſometimes longer, and ſometimes ſhorter. Our Saviour Christ, you know, ſometimes ſpent a whole night

night in prayer: Surely, he did not take ſo much time alwayes; and no doubt, wee have liberty ſometimes to be longer, ſometimes ſhorter, according as our occaſions will permit. But yet this you muſt remember, that though the buſineſſe bee great, yet that buſineſſe that concernes the ſalvation of our ſoules, and the worſhip of *God*, is greater: And therefore, before and above all other ſervices, this is ſtill to be preferred: for it is a buſineſſe of greater moment: take heed then you give a juſt weight to your buſineſſe, and not ſuffer every ſmall occaſion that comes in, to thruſt out this duty; for heere you keepe not the due proportion, but neglect the greater, and take the leſſe.

Matters concerning ſalvation to be preferred before outward buſineſſe.

Beſides, doe you not ſay, when you have great buſineſſe in hand, that a man muſt have a dining time, and a ſleeping time, &c. Why may wee not ſay as well, A man muſt have a praying time; is it not neceſſary? You know what *Iob* ſaith, you know the courſe that hee kept in reading the Word, (for that is cleerely meant in that place) *It was more precious to him than his appointed food:* that is, he had rather omit his uſuall meales, (for that he meanes by *his appointed food*) than to omit a cõſtant courſe in performing thoſe holy duties. Therefore, I ſay, it ought carefully to bee tooke heed of, that wee omit it not, except it be in a very great ſtrait; which if it ſhould happen, we may be ſhort in it, *God* ties us not ſo exactly you ſee, for no rules are ſet down in the Scriptures wherein we are tyed preciſely to ſuch an houre, to ſuch a time,

We ſhould allot time for prayer, as well as for other buſineſſe.

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a time, but *God* in mercy, and in wisedome, hath left it to our liberty: only observe, this is the command, *Pray continually*, doe it exceeding often, at the least, keepe a constant course in it, (as wee heard before) though you should be the shorter in it.

Cautions about shortnes of prayer in great straits. *Caution* 1. Husband time well a wayes.

Now let these five Cautions be observed:

1 First, take heed that the straitning come not from your ill husbandry, that is, from your ill husbanding of time; for, if a man were carefull to redeeme time before, (it may be) hee need not be put to such a strait as he is at that time, when heis to performe this duty. Suppose you have a journey to go, that requires much time, and you must be gone early; you may so husband the time before, that you may get time enough for your journey, and for the performance of this duty: and so for other businesse, as I said in the morning, you should labour to sequester your selves to performe this duty of prayer; and therfore take heed you be good stewards of your time, and that you husband it well.

2 And likewise, this is another part of husbanding your time, that you let not that which is very precious, goe for things of small moment; for that is ill husbandry. You should redeem the time, and buy it with the losse of something. You finde time enough to bestow in the weightiest busines of your calling, in things that belong to the good of man, much more should you in this that belongs to the worship of *God*: And therefore, if it may be, redeeme it with some losse; so you

you ought to husband it, otherwiſe you redeeme not time as you ought. This is the firſt Caution that ought to bee obſerved, to husband and redeeme the time well.

Caution 2. Recompence it another time.

The ſecond is, if wee be ſtrained at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feined excuſe and pretence, if you frame not to your ſelves a ſtraitning, when you have liberty, you will bee carefull to ſpend more time in it at another ſeaſon; by that you ſhall know your ſincerity in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuſe, and a putting off.

Caution 3. Take heed of too much buſineſſe.

Moreover, another Caution to be obſerved is, that you take not too much buſineſſe upon you: if you be ſtraitned with buſineſſe, and therefore cannot be ſo large in the performance of this duty, as otherwiſe you would if you did not take ſo much upon you, your ſelves are the cauſe of it. And therefore, he that takes leſſe, he that ſpends more time in the things that belong to ſalvation, he hath made the better choiſe; as *Mary* made a better choiſe than *Martha*, though her imployment alſo were good.

Caution 4. Be not too intent upon buſineſſe.

Likewiſe, as you muſt not peſter your ſelves with too much buſineſſe, ſo likewiſe you muſt take care, that your mindes be not too much intent upon them; for too much intention of mind upon buſineſſe, cauſeth diſtraction in prayer, and cauſeth us to poſt over the duty, as well as too much buſineſſe: when a mans minde ſhoots it ſelfe too farre in buſineſſe, when it is too much occupied about it, when it is too much intent, when

when the ſoule cleaves too faſt upon the buſines, and cannot looſe it ſelfe to the performance of ſpirituall duties, which require freedome.

Caution 5. Looke to the ground of the ſtrait.

The laſt Caution is, that the ſtrait riſe not from diffidence in *God*, and confidence in the uſe of the meanes; for it falls out oft times, when wee have buſineſſe of moment in hand, there is a turning, and poſting from one creature to another, from the uſe of one meanes to another, that wee cannot get time in prayer, not ſo much for want ſimply, but becauſe wee mind the meanes too much, we intend them too much, we doe not truſt *God* enough with the buſineſſe; if we did, we might ſpend leſſe time in them, and more in ſeeking to him. So much for that Caſe.

Caſe 7. About uſe of the meanes.

Another Caſe of conſcience in this buſineſſe of calling upon GOD is, What a man is to doe for the uſe of the meanes? for when we are bid to pray, and ſeeke to GOD, it is an ordinary queſtion amongſt us; But may we not uſe the meanes too?

Anſw. Reaſons why meanes muſt be uſed. *Reaſon* 1. Elſe our deſires are not good.

To this I anſwer, That prayer is ſo farre from excluding the meanes, that it includes them; for if the deſire bee fervent, when wee deſire any thing at GODS hands, it will make us diligent in the uſe of the meanes, to uſe a convenient diligence, as it will make you earneſt in ſeeking to *God*, and in putting up your requeſt to him. For, if a man ſhall pray, and bee negligent in the uſe of the meanes, I will bee bold to ſay it; it is but like the deſire of the ſluggard, that is, a languiſhing, and fainting deſire: Hee deſires, but his

his soule hath nothing, for he desires, but he puts his hand into his bosome: the desires which you expresse, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earnest, if you bee remisse in the use of the meanes. Hee that desires grace, and strength against sinfull lusts and temptation, and yet is remisse in the use of the meanes, by which grace should bee increased, and strength gained, to resist those corruptions and temptations, certainely his desires are but vaine and empty desires.

Reason 2. Else it is a signe we trust not God.

Besides, it is an argument that wee trust not in GOD, that wee make no accompt of our prayers, except wee be diligent in the use of the meanes, therefore wee are farre from excluding them; for, if you seeke to GOD, and trust to your prayers, and thinke that they will prevaile with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to use such meanes, as *God* hath ordained to bring the thing to passe. Even as, if a man seeke to a Physician, to such a Physician as hee trusts to, into whose hands hee would put his life; when this Physician prescribes such a course, such a dyet, and such a thing to bee taken at such a time, the more hee rests upon the Physician, the more carefull hee will bee to observe his prescription and rules: And so, in this case, the more you rest on *God*, the more carefull you will be to use such meanes as hee hath appointed, when hee hath said, these and these meanes are to bee used. In this case, I say, it is a signe your prayers are more

Simile.

to

to purpoſe, when you are diligent in the uſe of them, when you dare not ſleight nor neglect them.

Reaſon 3. It is that wee pray for.

Againe, you muſt conſider this, that when we pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to have any thing done without meanes; but wee pray to have a bleſſing upon the meanes; and, if we pray for a bleſſing upon the meanes, our minde is not that they ſhould be omitted: for, you know, *God* doth all things by ſecond cauſes, he ſaves us not without our ſelves, that is, hee uſeth us as inſtruments, hee doth every thing by men, by creatures, and by meanes; and the end of our prayers is, not to have them done without meanes, but to have a bleſſing powred downe upon them. But that which is chiefly to be obſerved to cleere this point to you is this; That prayer is not the only meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any thing to paſſe.

Reaſon 4. Prayer not the onely meanes.

There are two things to effect a buſineſſe, that is, prayer and meanes both: we doe not ſay prayer is the onely meanes, indeede, then the other were excluded; but ſince it is but a part, and the other makes up the totall meanes of bringing any thing to paſſe, it doth not exclude them, but they may be both joyned together, prayer and the uſe of the meanes. This is enough to ſhew that we may uſe meanes, we may pray, and lay our hand on the Plough, wee may ſeeke to *God*, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body elſe. But now theſe three Cautions are to be obſerved:

Cautions about the uſe of the meanes.

The

The first is, That, if we doe use meanes, wee should use those that are right; for if you trust *God*, and depend upon him, you will not steppe out to any inordinate meanes, nor use lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: If you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, for you doe not rest on GOD, which if you did, you would never use any other meanes, than hee hath appointed. *Caution 1.* Wee must use right meanes.

Secondly, though you use the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so use the meanes and praier both, as that your confidence rests not only thereupon: for it is one thing to use the means, & it is another thing to have confidence in them. And therfore we say to you in this case, that you must doe as he that useth the light of the Sun; he so useth the light, as that he hath an eye upon the Sun, from whom that light comes; for he knowes that if the Sun were set, the light would be gone. Or as he that takes water in a Cisterne, or River, he so takes it, as that he hath an eye to the Fountaine, hee knowes if the Fountaine were stopped, the River would bee quickly dryed up: So you should thinke with your selves, if I use any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must be upon *God*: for all the helpe that we have from the creature, it is but as a beame to the helpe that comes from *God* himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Physitians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one princi-pall *Caution 2.* Not trust the meanes. *Simile.* *Simile.* *Simile.*

pall ingredient, amongſt the reſt, that he makes account will cure the diſeaſe. So doe in this caſe, make uſe, both of prayer, & of the meanes; yet you muſt know, that neither prayer nor the meanes are the principall effector of the thing, but the principall meanes indeed, wherein your confidence is to be, is *God* that doth bring every thing to paſſe: There is no good in the City, nor no evill, but he doth it; you know hee takes all to himſelfe. All the meanes, by which good and ill is conveyed to you, doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the inſtruments; as the Beere and the Wine wherein the Phyſicke is taken, but it is the Phyſicke and the medicine that cures; So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe and the power of GOD, the efficacy that comes from him, that brings things to paſſe; therefore that muſt bee remembred, uſe the meanes continually, but with dependance upon GOD, with an eye upon him, let not your hearts reſt upon them onely; for if they doe, it is an inordinate uſe of them.

Simile.

Caution 3. Not to ſticke to particular meanes.

Laſtly, you muſt take heed of ſticking in any particular meanes; for if you doe, it is a ſigne that you truſt not GOD as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch upon ſuch a particular way, and wee thinke that muſt doe it, or nothing. Now if GOD be truſted to, he hath more wayes to the wood than one, he hath more means to bring a thing to paſſe than one: And therefore wee muſt leave it to him, who often doth it beſt by

by another meanes than wee dreamed of. As for example; *David* had a promiſe of the Kingdome: Now, when hee had the Kingdome of *Iudah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Iſrael* ſtood out; for *Iſhboſheth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: beſides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Iudah*, wee ſee how *God* wrought the buſineſſe, without his device, by a meanes that he never thought of, in that battell, when *Saul* was killed, and ſo many of his ſonnes, there was ſo much way made for him, when himſelfe uſed no meanes to bring it to paſſe. Afterward, when the Kingdome of *Iſrael* was kept from him, and hee had onely *Iudah*; wee ſee, *God* cauſed diviſion betweene *Iſhboſheth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captaine: upon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemie; and what *Abner* might have done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, (though *Ioab* ſinned in it) cauſed *Abner* to be taken away by *Ioab*: when this was done, yet *Iſhboſheth* was alive ſtill; then were there two men ſet by the providence of *God*, (though it were a great ſinne in them) to take away his head; and ſo the Kingdome came wholly to *David*: for, there were but two ſonnes; *Mephiboſheth*, that was lame of his feet; and *Iſhboſheth*, that was lame in his minde; a weake man, unable to manage ſo great and weightie a buſineſſe, to purpoſe. So *God* brought the buſineſſe to paſſe, by a way that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may uſe meanes; yet, after the uſe of them, wee

muſt depend upon *God*, and leave it to *God*, to take one meanes, or other. Wee muſt doe in this caſe, as wee doe when wee goe to a man that is very skilfull to doe a worke for us: If wee goe to a Carpenter, and tell him wee have ſuch a thing to be done; or, if wee goe to thoſe that wee call *Aquarioli*, that bring water from place to place, wee tell him, this is our deſire: but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to paſſe, wee know not, and yet wee truſt ſuch an one; for wee ſay, He is an honeſt man of his word, and if he have undertaken it, it is enough: Why then will you not truſt *God*, that goes ſo much beyond us, that hath an infinite Wiſdome, and an infinite Power? And therefore let us all ſo uſe the meanes, that withall wee keepe our dependance upon him; that wee leave it to him, to uſe this or that meanes as it pleaſeth him: for ſometimes, it may be, hee takes away that which wee are about; ſometimes hee leaves us partly deſtitute, and findes a way of his owne, that wee might truſt to him, and be confident of his Power and Wiſdome, in that he is able to doe the thing wee deſire. So much likewiſe ſhall ſerve for this Caſe.

Wee are more apt to truſt men than *God*.

Why God workes not by our meanes.

Caſe 8. About praying in faith, when a man wants a particular promiſe, that the thing which he asketh ſhall be granted.

Another Caſe is, What it is to pray in faith? You know that is required. Now there is a common error in this point: for a man may ſay, If I pray for the ſalvation of another, I have no promiſe; how can I pray in faith? When a man prayes to be guided in ſuch a buſineſſe, to have ſuch an enterprize to be brought to paſſe, to have deliverance from ſuch a trouble, ſuch a ſickneſſe,

from

from ſuch a calamitie, that he lyes under, he findes no particular promiſe, and for ought he knowes, it ſhall never be granted: How can he then be ſaid to pray in faith? For, to pray in faith, is to beleeve that the thing wee pray for, ſhall be brought to paſſe and accompliſhed.

Anſw. I anſwer, That to pray in faith, is to goe as farre as the promiſe goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promiſe, that he ſhall have ſuch a deliverance, that he ſhall have ſuch a particular mercy granted him; and therefore it is not required to beleeve, that that particular thing ſhould be done.

Object. What faith is required in prayer.

But you will ſay, What faith is it then that is required?

Anſw. I ſay, it is enough to beleeve that GOD is a Father, that hee is readie to heare; and not onely that hee is readie to heare, but that hee is readie to doe that which is beſt for me, in ſuch a particular: for both are required, That you beleeve him to be well affected towards you, as a Father, as one that tenders your good; and not onely ſo, but that he will doe that, in that particular, that ſhall be moſt for his owne glory, and for your good: And, if you doe ſo, you pray in faith; though (for the particular) you know not, whether it ſhall be granted or no. Indeed, if wee had a particular promiſe, as *Elias* had, that it ſhould not raine, &c. in that caſe, wee were bound to beleeve in particular; but not having that, wee are not tyed unto it: for the promiſe is the object of faith, and the habit is

Wee are not bound to beleeve, that the particular thing ſhalbe granted which we pray for.

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not to worke beyond the object; for the object is the rule and the limit of the habit: therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you have no ground to beleeve, and to thinke, that that particular thing ſhould be granted. For example: If a Father pray, that his ſonne may have grace wrought in his heart, that his ſoule may be ſaved; it may be the LORD will never doe it: or, if one friend pray for another, to the ſame purpoſe; though the thing be not done, yet the prayer returnes into his boſome, hee is no loſer by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for ſeeking to GOD in ſinceritie; it is his dutie, that hee ſhould doe ſo. The like I may ſay for every other particular caſe. And this encouragement you may have, That there is never any particular prayer put up, wherein you ſeeke things that are not granted, but you miſtake in it; for, if you beleeve thus farre, as I ſaid to you, be ſure that your prayers are accepted, GOD will doe that which is beſt for you, and your prayers ſhall not be loſt. So much alſo for that.

If our prayers be not granted, we miſtake in them.

Caſe 9. About a mans knowledge that his prayer is heard.

The laſt caſe is, How ſhall a man know whether his prayer be heard, or not?

Anſw. For anſwer to this, wee will give you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) That thoſe prayers that are made by the aſſiſtance of GODS holy Spirit, it is certaine, they are alwayes heard: if you finde that at any time, you need make no queſtion, but that GOD heares it, and will doe the thing, obſerving the Cautions that wee have given you heretofore, that is, for the meanes,

meanes, the manner, the time, and the meaſure: for it cannot be, but that when the heart is inlarged by GOD s owne Spirit, and the prayer is an expreſſion of holy deſires; the LORD alwayes heares. That place is cleere for it, *Rom.* 8. 27. that *Hee knowes the meaning of the Spirit:* that is, he ſo knowes it, that hee hearkeneth to it, that hee alwayes accepts of it: and therefore, when you come in ſuch a caſe, at any time, that your hearts are inlarged in a ſpeciall manner: Marke, I ſay, when your hearts are inlarged in a ſpeciall manner, and that, with holy deſires, certainely, then GOD meanes to grant our requeſts: hee would not ſend his Spirit to be an interceſſor in your hearts, if hee did not meane to doe it: for, on the contrary, hee withholds his ſpirit, he gives us not that inlargement of heart. Only this diſtinction muſt be carefully remembred; you may be ſometime very earneſt, (the parent may be very earneſt for his child, as *David* was for his; and *Moſes* for ought wee ſee, was earneſt to have gone into the Land of *Canaan*, they were things that they deſired) and yet that may be an expreſſion of naturall deſires. In which caſe a man may bee very earneſt, and yet he cannot build upon it, to ſay my heart is much inlarged in prayer, and therefore I ſhall be heard.

Rom. 8. 27.

When God will grant our prayers, and when not.

Note.

But obſerve this, when the heart is inlarged with holy deſires, and that in a ſpeciall manner, ſomewhat more than ordinary, as that, you ſee, it is the worke of the Spirit of GOD, quickning your heart, opening it wide, ſtrengthning and

What kinde of inlargement of heart argues that our prayers are heard.

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inlarging it, and ſharpening grace and holineſſe in you, in thoſe requeſts you put up to *God*; in this caſe, build upon it, for you may be ſure your praiers are heard, from that ground wee even now gave you, *Hee knowes the meaning of the ſpirit.* So much ſhall ſerve for thoſe caſes of Conſcience in this ſpirituall duty of calling upon *God.*

Qualifications or conditions required in that prayer that ſhall bee accepted.

Now the laſt thing we propounded was this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for ſince we have ſaid ſo much of prayer, it is a neceſſary thing that wee know what conditions are required, that it may bee acceptable.

Caution 1. That the perſon be right. *Iames* 5.16.

And the firſt (we will commend to you, which is the ground, and firſt in order before al the reſt) is, that *the perſon be right. The prayer of the righteous doth prevaile much, Iames* 5.16.

1 Becauſe a man muſt have Chriſt, before hee have any thing elſe.

The ground of it is this; a man muſt firſt have Chriſt before he can have any thing elſe, *He hath given us all things elſe with Chriſt:* If wee have all things elſe, if we have not him, it is nothing: *All his promiſes* (you know) *are yea and amen*, but it is in *him*; ſo that we muſt firſt have him.

2 The generall Covenant is before the particular.

And beſides, the generall Covenant muſt goe before the particular: for the ground of all praier is this or that particular promiſe, but you muſt firſt be within the Covenant, you muſt firſt have the generall Covenant belonging to you, before you can have the particular branches of it; & therfore a man muſt be within the covenāt, his perſon muſt be firſt righteous, before he be accepted: & therefore let none deceive himſelfe in this caſe, to thinke

thinke thus with himſelfe, he hopes his heart is ſincere, and his prayers right, and his ends are good; for though all this were true, yet if his perſon be not right, GOD regards it not. You know the blood of a ſheepe, and the blood of a ſwine, they are both alike, it may bee the blood of the ſwine is better than the other, yet the blood of the ſwine was not to be offered, becauſe it was the blood of a ſwine. So in this caſe, the praier of an unregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions, for every thing that is required immediately to a praier, but the heart from whence it comes, the perſon, from whence it proceeds, that is it that makes the difference: let this therefore be chiefly obſerved, that the perſon be right. And therefore you ſhall find, *Pſal.* 4. 3. *David* makes that the ground, why his prayers ſhould be heard: ſaith he, *Be yee ſure that God hath choſen for himſelfe the godly man: And when I call upon him I ſhall be heard.* For that is the ground that hee takes to himſelfe, why he ſhall be heard, becauſe *God* hath choſen to himſelfe the godly man. As if he ſhould ſay, I am of the number of the godly and therefore you that are my enemies, and think to prevaile againſt me, I feare you not, for I pray to a *God* that will defend me; I am a godly man, and upon that ground I beleeve that my prayer is heard. *Beloved*, otherwiſe though wee pray, and pray hard, yet our ſinnes cry lowder than our prayers, they cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noiſe then they; for the noiſe that our ſinnes make is like the noiſe of a Thunder,

Simile.

An unregenerate man may frame a praier as well as a holy man.

Pſal. 4. 3.

Our ſins outcry our praiers till our perſons be right.

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when the noiſe of our praiers is but like the crackling of thornes, which cannot be heard for the noiſe that ſinne makes in the eares of the *Lord*. Thus it is, in this caſe, when we come before *God* in our ſins, when a man comes into his preſence in his unregeneracy.

2 Remove particular ſinnes.

But this is not all, for certaine it is, a man that is within the Covenant, may have a particular ſinne, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his praiers, and that may hinder the bleſſing: ſo that that ſinne muſt be removed, before his prayers can be heard. It is true, *The Sonne abides in the houſe for ever*, but yet the ſon may commit ſuch an offence, that his father may uſe him as a ſervant, hee may deny his requeſts, and refuſe them, when he comes to ſeeke any thing at his hands. And therefore, there muſt be a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that ſinne muſt be removed, and done away, that ſtands in the way. This was the method the Saints alwaies have kept in calling upon *God*: See it in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the moſt part, when they make any compleat prayer, wee ſee, ſtill they begin with humiliation, and confeſſion of ſinnes. And the reaſon of it is, that their perſons might bee cleare and innocent, that thoſe ſinnes might be removed, which would ſtand in their way; and this likewiſe is a ground of that 1. *Tim.* 2.8. ſaith the Apoſtle there, *I will, that prayers bee made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*: The meaning is this, not onely that a man bee within the Covenant, but that

Why the Saints begin their Prayers with humiliation.

1. *Tim.* 2.8.

that he be cleanſed from all particular ſins, that might cleave to him, and hang upon him. As for example, when thou wouldeſt be accepted of *God*, if there doe any particular ſin hang on thee, that muſt bee removed by renewing thy repentance. And beſides that, ſee what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart muſt be cleanſed from pride (for *God reſiſts the proud*) his heart muſt be brought to an humble diſpoſition; likewiſe it muſt be clenſed from wrath, hee muſt *lift up pure hands without wrath*; which is oft required; *Mat.* 5. *Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy Brother.* So likewiſe from unthankfulneſſe; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankfull for mercies received. The like wee may ſay of every particular ſinne; wee muſt be carefull to cleanſe our ſelves from all ſinfull luſts, and corrupt affections, that they have not dominion in our hearts; but that we lift up pure hearts and innocent hands. And that is the firſt thing that is required, that the perſon be right; that is, not onely that hee bee within the Covenant, but likewiſe that thoſe particular ſinnes be removed, that may be an impediment to his prayers.

When we pray we muſt clenſe our hearts.

1 From pride.

2 From wrath. *Mat.* 5. 23, 24.

3 From unthankfulneſſe.

The ſecond thing required is, *Faith*; *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting.* You know that in *Iames*, *Let him that wanteth wiſedome aske of God, let him aske in faith and wauer not.* So that though prayer be the key to open *Gods* treaſures, yet faith is the hand that turnes the key, without which it will doe no good.

2 Requiſite or condition is faith. *Iames* 1. 5, 6.

Simile.

Now

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Why the Lord requires faith in prayer.

1 Now the *Lord* requires faith, partly, for his owne ſake, he ſhould not otherwiſe be acknowledged, if you did not truſt him, when you come to ſeeke him, if you did not reſt upon him.

2 Beſides, he ſhould loſe his glory; for in this we glorifie him, when we truſt him; and we diſhonour him, when we diſtruſt him; when we come and ſeeke to him, and doe not reſt upon him, we diſhonour him.

3 Beſides, in regard of us hee requires faith, and will not heare us without it; becauſe, as it is *Iames* 1. 6. in the ſame place, where faith is required, there is good reaſon why it is required: For, ſaith the Apoſtle there, *Hee that beleeves not, or hee that wavers, hee is like a wave of the Sea:* that is, ſometimes in his prayer hee is very earneſt, as a wave that ſwells high; ſometimes againe hee will be nothing at all: yea, ſaith the Apoſtle, he is not only uneven in the buſineſſe of prayer, ſometimes earneſt and forward, and ſometimes giving over againe, off and on; but ſuch a man is unſtable in all his wayes: for he that truſts in *God*, will be carefull not in prayer only, but to keep all his wayes right; but he that truſts him not, wavers in every thing: he is (it may be) diligent in prayer, he will looke to his wayes for a time; but he reſts not upon *God*, hee reſts upon other things, *Hee is like a wave*, hee is not conſtant: and therefore faith is required.

Iames 1. 6.

A two-fold faith required in our prayers.

Now when I ſay faith is required, know this, that there is a double faith required:

The one, is a faith in the *providence* of *God*; the other, is a faith in his *promiſe*.

First,

First, I say, faith in *Gods providence* (which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it.) We see it cleerely, *Psal.* 146. *Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Iacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, who keepes covenant, and mercy for ever:* you see faith there required in the providence, *He made heaven and earth, the sea*; he is such a *God*, who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he not able to doe any thing besides?

1 Faith in Gods providence. *Psal.* 146. 5, 6.

Secondly, there must be a faith in his *promises*, which is expressed in the next words, *He keepeth Covenant for ever.* So likewise to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha* and *Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleeved hee was ready enough to doe it (there was faith in his willingnesse) but they wanted faith in his providence; for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, LORD, saith she, *Hee hath beene in the grave foure dayes*; as if she had said, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might have been brought to passe: so she beleeved him to be willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

2 Faith in the promises.

Againe, as here faith in the providence was wanting; so we see, in the Leper, there was faith in the providence (it may be, the other was wanting, but that is not expressed, it is more probable hee had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole:* Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, he acknowledgeth his power, *If thou wilt, thou canst make me whole:* but because *Christ* did fulfill his desire, it is likely hee had faith

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faith in the promiſe too; ſo, I ſay, there muſt be a faith, firſt, in the providence; ſecondly, there muſt bee a faith alſo in the promiſe of *God*: you have ground enough for that, you have his ſure word for it, hee hath ſaid, *Aske and you ſhall have, ſeeke and yee ſhall finde, knocke and it ſhall be opened to you; and whatſoever you aske, if it bee according to his will, it ſhall be done to you.* So that is the thing wee are chiefly to looke unto, to conſider this faith in *Gods* promiſe; for men are ready to ſay, I doubt not but *God* is able, but all the queſtion is, whether he be willing or no. And therefore, if we will have our prayers ſtrong, and prevalent, we muſt bee carefull to ſtrengthen our faith in his promiſe: for, as that is ſtrong, ſo our prayers doe more prevaile with *God*. It is a matter of much moment, and therefore we will ſhew briefly how your faith may be ſtrengthned, and likewiſe how you may know it.

Matth. 7. 7.

Wee doubt of Gods willingnes more than of his power to grant our requeſts.

How faith may bee ſtrengthned in prayer. From Gods Attributes, which are of two ſorts: 1 Abſolute.

Firſt, you ſhall ſtrengthen your faith, if you conſider the *nature* of GOD. *Beloved*, this is a great cauſe why wee beleeve not the promiſe of *God*, and his readineſſe to helpe us in difficult caſes, becauſe wee are ignorant of the Nature of *God*, of the Attributes of *God*; or at leaſt, we doe not conſider them. For example, (that I may open it to you a little, and ſhew you the way of making uſe of the Attributes of *God*, in calling upon him, & ſtrengthening our faith from them) conſider, firſt, the *Iuſtice* of *God*, (I will give you examples, how the Saints have ſtill ſtrengthned their faith from *Gods* Attributes) *David* uſeth this Argu-

1 *Iuſtice.*

Argument; *Lord, thou art Iust, I am Innocent:* When hee telleth *God* of his Iustice, and withall expresseth his owne Innocencie, it is a strong Argument. *David*, you see, useth it oft, (I need not to name particulars) *Lord, reward me according to mine Innocencie, &c. Thou knowest I am righteous*, and mine enemies have done me thus and thus much wrong, and *thou art just: God* cannot deny this; for it is a strong Argument, that is taken from such an Attribute.

2 Mercy. So againe, the *Goodnesse of God: Lord, thou art full of Mercie*; on the other side, *I am full of Miserie:* And when these are put together, it is a great meanes to strengthen our faith. And therefore, wee see, *David* often expresseth his owne calamitie, his disease, how hee was oppressed by enemies, and slandered, &c. and *Gods* Mercie, (that is the ground of it) *God is full of compassion:* As if he should say; Thou art full of goodnesse, and I am in calamitie, and miserie, at this time: and that was an Argument whereby he strengthened his faith.

3 Glory. So againe, another Attribute of *God* is, his *Glory:* when wee make the Argument thus; *Lord*, Thou hast an eye to thy Glory, and I aime at thy Glory: in such a request, it is a strong prevailing Argument with him. You know, *Moses* prevailed with him, when he sought the saving of the whole people of *Israel: Lord* (saith he) *thy Name will be polluted, what will the Heathen say?* And since I aime at thy Glory in it, deny me not. And likewise *Ezekias*, and *David*, they use the same Argument

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gument to *God*; *Shall the duſt praiſe thee?* Shall any Glory be given to thee in the grave? Shall wee be able to doe any thing for thy honour, when wee are dead? So that the Arguments that are taken from *Gods* Glory, and our aime at his Glory, is another meanes to ſtrengthen our faith.

4 Power. Moreover, the *Power* of *God*, that is another Attribute; whereby wee may conceive the ſame Argument, (as I ſaid before) when wee goe to *God*, and expreſſe our weakeneſſe, and his Power: *Lord*, wee are weake, wee are able to doe nothing; *Lord*, thou art Almightie, thou mad'ſt Heaven and Earth; it is a ſtrong Argument to prevaile with him. So, wee ſee, *Aſa* prevailed with *God*, 2 *Chron.* 14. *Oh Lord* (ſaith he) *it is all one with thee to helpe with many, or few, and wee reſt upon thee.* As if hee ſhould ſay: Wee are exceeding few, wee are exceeding weake, wee are able to doe nothing; but thou art able to doe it with a few, as well as with a great multitude: there hee puts them together. 2 *Chron.* 20. 12 And the like wee have of *Iehoſaphat*: *Lord, wee have no ſtrength to ſtand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee.* As if he ſhould ſay; Thou haſt ſtrength and power enough, thou art able to doe it, though wee are unable. This is another Argument taken from the Power of *God*.

1 *Chron.* 14. 11.

5 Vnchangeableneſſe. Againe, the *Vnchangeableneſſe* of *God*. When one comes to the *Lord*, and ſhall ſay to him: *Lord*, thou haſt done thus and thus in former times for thy ſervants; *Lord*, thou haſt done thus and thus for me, in another caſe; and thou art unchangeable, thou art the ſame *God*: this is a great meanes

meanes to ſtrengthen our faith. As you know, it is in your Law-ſuits, when you have a preſident, it addes ſtrength to the cauſe, ſo when we have preſidents for this, it will adde ſtrength to us, and that ſtrength is taken from *Gods* unchangeableneſſe: if wee put them together, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, *Lord*, thou haſt done it to other men in the like caſe; thou haſt done it to me alſo in the like caſe: It is a ſtrong Argument, and an Argument that *David* uſeth; you ſee how hee is ſtayed up by it, *Pſal.* 22.4. *Lord, our fathers truſted in thee, and were delivered, they truſted in thee, and were not confounded.* As if he ſhould ſay; *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, thou heardeſt them in the ſame caſe when they truſted in thee; now, it is my caſe, and therefore I beſeech thee to helpe mee in my diſtreſſe.

Simile.

Pſal. 22. 4.

Againe, the *faithfulneſſe* of *God*, the fidelity of *God*; that is another of his Attributes: and when wee make our Argument thus, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, and I truſt in thee; it is a ſtrong Argument, for you know, it is an Argument that prevailes much with men; a man is ready to ſay, hee truſts me, I muſt not deceive him: Much more the LORD keepes Covenant, and mercy for ever. When wee come, and uſe this to him, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, thou haſt ſaid, thou wilt keepe Covenant and mercy for ever, thou canſt not doe otherwiſe, it is thy nature, thou canſt not deny thy ſelfe, and I reſt on thee, I depend on thee; in ſuch a caſe, it cannot bee the *Lord* ſhould faile us: If a man will not faile one that truſts in him, certainely

6 Faithfulneſſe.

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certainely the *Lord* will not: and that is an Argument that is uſed oft, Thou never faileſt them that truſt thee.

2 Relative. Then, beſides the abſolute Attributes of God, conſider his relative Attributes; he is a *Father*, and a *Maſter:* It is a ſtrong Argument that is taken from theſe. If wee goe to the *Lord*, and ſay, *Lord*, thou art a Father, thou art a Maſter, thou art an Husband; Whither ſhould the Children goe, but to their Father? Whither ſhould the Wife goe, but to her Husband? Whither ſhould the Servants goe, but to their Maſter, to their *Lord? Lord*, thou haſt commanded us to provide for our owne, and, *He is worſe than an Infidell, that provides not for his owne: Lord*, wee belong to thee, wee are thine. Wee ſee, *David* uſeth this Argument, That God *had made him.* You have it oft in the *Pſalmes*, That God had made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his Servant; *I am thy Servant:* Hee uſeth oft this Relative, That God was *his* God, and that he was Gods *Servant*, one that did belong to him, and that did depend upon him. And ſurely (my Beloved) dependance, and ſeeking to God, is a great meanes to winne him to us. When we ſee another depend upon us, and lookes after no body elſe, that is an effectuall motive with men: the ſame is as prevalent with God; and therefore may ſtrengthen our faith. Now, when I ſay theſe Arguments prevaile with God, the meaning is indeed, that they prevaile with us, they ſtrengthen our faith, they enable us to beleeve, that God is readie to helpe

Arguments in prayer ſtrengthen our faith.

helpe us, and when wee beleeve it, and truſt upon him, then indeed GOD is ready to ſecond it; becauſe then wee are prepared, wee can then put up our deſires in the prayer of faith; otherwiſe they are put up with doubting, and that makes them unacceptable to GOD, and uneffectuall. And, now as I haue ſhewed you the way, ſo likewiſe in a word, we will ſhew you when wee doe pray in faith (for that is a thing that is very uſefull) you ſhall know it by this (for I adde that becauſe I ſee the Scriptures require it, as ſuch a maine condition, without which a man cannot be accepted, *Bee it done to thee, according to thy faith*; it is every where inculcated) you ſhall know it, I ſay, by the quietneſſe of your mind, and your ſecurity. When a man cals upon GOD, and his mind is quiet in it, it is a ſigne that he beleeves, and truſts in him, it is a prayer of faith. *Hannah*, you know, in that caſe, *looked no more ſad*, becauſe ſhe truſted in *God*, ſhee beleeved the thing ſhould be done and reſted therein: and therefore if you find ſolicitude and perplexity in your mind, it is a ſigne that your praiers want ſo much faith; for if you did reſt upon *God*, you would be quiet, and ſecure in him.

How wee may know that wee pray in faith.

1 By the quietneſſe of the minde after.

Secondly, if you doe beleeve, you will continue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of the faith of the woman of *Canaan*, that ſhe continued, that ſhe would take no deniall; though the *Lord* did not grant her requeſt, but put her off, yet ſhe held out: & what was the reaſon of it? becauſe ſhe beleeved that he was the ſon of *David*, that he

2 By continuance in prayer.

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was mercifull, and that hee would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer is an argument we doe beleeve the *Lord*. As a man that beleeves, ſuch a man is within the houſe whom he deſires to ſpeake with, is content to wait long for him: Or he, that hath a ſuit, and knowes that he ſhall have an end of it at ſuch a time, he will never give over till it bee effected: So it is in this caſe; if we beleeve, we will be content to wait, *He that beleeves will not make haſte*, becauſe he truſts in GOD, and depends upon him.

Simile.

Iſay. 28.

3 Diligence in the uſe of the meanes.

Laſtly, a diligent uſe of thoſe meanes that *God* hath preſcribed, and no other, is a great argument that our prayer is with faith. And thus wee have ſhewed you the two things that are required in prayer; firſt, that the perſon muſt be righteous, and within the covenant; ſecondly, that there muſt bee a beleeving in *God*: as alſo how this faith is wrought, both in his providence, and in his promiſes; and likewiſe how we ſhall know, whether our prayers be the prayers of faith, or no.

FINIS.

THE

THE FIFTH SERMON.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THE next condition required in prayer is *fervency*; you know the place, *The prayer of the righteous availeth much, if it be fervent*. The *Lord* requires this qualification in prayer, because it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition: for it is not simply the making of the request, that God lookes for at our hands, but such a working upon our hearts by prayer, such a bringing of them to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby wee are more

3. Condition required in prayer is fervency. *Iames 5. 16.*

What God requires in prayer.

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fitted to receive the mercy, that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it ſets all the wheeles of his ſoule the right way, it puts the heart into a holy and ſpirituall diſpoſition and temper; ſo that the *Lord* ſees it now fit to beſtow mercy upon ſuch a man, that before was unfit, by reaſon of his untowardneſſe, and ſtubborneſſe of heart, by reaſon of that uncleane and unholy diſpoſition, that he ſaw in him. And therefore hee wil have prayer fervent; not ſo much becauſe the very fervency of prayer it ſelfe is reſpected, but becauſe by vertue of that fervency the heart is made better: when a man comes to *God* with a requeſt, like the requeſt of the Patient to the Phyſician, it may be the Phyſician denyes long, when the Patient askes things that are pleaſant and agreeable to him, not becauſe he is unwilling to give them, but becauſe his body muſt be brought into another temper, he muſt take a vomit, or a purge, which perhaps is grievous to the Patient, but this muſt be done before he be fit to receive ſuch cordials: ſo the *Lord* deales with his ſervants, though he be willing to beſtow ſuch mercies on them, yet, becauſe they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervency in it. Therefore, we ſay, in prayer all the graces of *Gods* Spirit are ſet on work, and the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increaſed; and therefore the *Lord* is moved by this fervency, to beſtow a mercy on us, that otherwiſe hee would not doe.

Why God requires fervencie.

Simile.

But

But now all the queſtion is, what this fervencie is.

Queſt.

You ſhall find it uſually expreſſed in the Scriptures by ſuch metaphors as theſe, *Crying to the Lord, wreſtling with the Lord, ſtriving with him,* and *giving him no reſt*: wherein theſe two things are to be marked:

Anſw. When a man is ſaid to bee fervent.

First, a man is ſaid then to be fervent, when he puts all his ſtrength to prayer, when hee is very earneſt, and importunate with the *Lord*, when hee ſtrives and contends with him, though hee finde many difficulties, and impediments, yet he breakes through all; this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the *Lord*. For example, when a man comes to pray, hee findes many diſcouragements, and himſelfe (perhaps) guilty of many ſinnes, yea, he findes little holineſſe, he hath but feeble faith to his owne ſenſe, and much deadneſſe of ſpirit, yet he continues inſtant notwithſtanding; nay, further hee doth not onely finde theſe impediments in himſelfe, but hee finds the *Lord* exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no anſwer, turning the deafe eare to him, or (it may be) giving a contrary anſwer, as to the woman of *Canaan*. But to give you a particular example; when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his ſicknes increaſeth upon him more; when he prayes to overcome ſuch a luſt or temptation, it may be, it is doubled upon him; when hee prayes for ſuch a deliverance, it may be, the oppreſſion growes more and more; as it was with the *Iſraelites*, when they ſought for deliverance

1

When we put to all our ſtrength notwithſtanding difficulties.

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liverance out of *Ægypt*, the oppreſſion grew greater: now to hold out notwithſtanding this, and to continue in praier, and to out-wraſtle *God* in it, though he ſeeme backward to the requeſt; this is to be fervent in prayer.

2 When we are conſtant.

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not only importunate with the *Lord*, but hee continues long, hee will not give over, till he have got the bleſſing. You know, *Iacobs* fervency was ſeene in that, that he continued all night, *He wreſtled with the Lord*. What was the reaſon that he wreſtled? *Hee would not let him goe, till he had got the bleſſing*, till he had obtained the thing he ſought for. So I ſay, this earneſtneſſe, & continuance in praier, the breaking thorow all difficulties, this is to wreſtle with the *Lord*: for all wreſtling and ſtriving (you know) ſuppoſeth ſome oppoſition on the other part. Indeed, if there were no oppoſition, it were a ſmall thing; but, I ſay, when the *Lord* is moſt backward, when the thing is moſt improbable, when there is much difficulty, ſo that you know not how it ſhould be brought to paſſe, yet if you continue ſtriving, and give the *Lord* no reſt, as though you would never give over: this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the *Lord* requires: but here two Cautions muſt be remembred, that we miſtake not this fervency:

Cautions about fervency.

1 That it bee a fruit of faith.

Firſt (remember) fervency, if it be right, it muſt be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervency that comes not from faith, but from a naturall ſence of want, when a man is indeed as a ſwine that

that is pinched, which you know, will cry exceeding loud, not because it lookes for help, but because it is pinched: so any other creature, or a mā naturally will use importunity, when he wants any thing, and will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the *Lord* regards not, because there is no more but a meere expression of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the Spirit; but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sence of the thing wee want, but also a hope of mercy, a ground to beleeve that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate; now earnestnesse is a fruit of faith. When Iesus Christ liued upon earth, when men came and cryed earnestly unto him and were exceeding importunate; some to bee healed of their diseases, some to have devils cast out, &c. we see his answer was still to them, Be it to thee (how?) not according to their importunity and fervency, but according to their faith: as if hee should say, I heed not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they bee onely expressions of such wants, if they be onely in the sence of such need, and no more; but if they proceed from faith, and that faith set you on worke to call upon mee, *Bee it unto thee according to that.* For indeed, these two things make up fervency in prayer; *sence of need, and hope of mercy*; when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervency, and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other (not that I exclude the other, for it is a very great helpe and

When fervency is a fruit of faith.

Whence, fervency springs.

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that which puts ſtickes on the fire (as it were) to make our fervency the more) I ſay, from ſenſe of our need, when we conſider ſeriouſly what want wee have, and then adde this hope, and faith, when theſe two ſhall ſet you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. And this is one Caution that muſt be remembred.

Caution 2. That it bee mingled with ſincerity.

Another Caution is this, that your fervency be joyned with ſincerity; for a man may be fervent to obtaine ſuch and ſuch bleſſings, as hee may beg at GODS hand very earneſtly, hee may aske credit, he may aske to have guidance in ſuch a buſineſſe, he may aske wiſdome to bring ſuch an enterpriſe to paſſe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may beſtow it upon his luſts, if it be that hee may live more deliciouſly, that hee may be ſome body more in the world, that hee may have outward conveniencies, ſuch as his fleſh deſires, if this bee all, here this fervency is not regarded; not that theſe things are excluded, for the *Lord* gives us leave to ſeeke our owne comforts, and you may be earneſt, and importunate, even for the comfort it ſelfe; but yet all theſe if they bee not capable of a further uſe, if that be not intended, but the abuſe of them, and an intent to uſe them another way, the LORD heeds it not, it is no true fervency. And therefore in *Rom.* 12. 11. it is the exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord*; when we many times (it may bee) are fervent in ſpirit, ſerving our ſelves, we are fervent to aske ſuch and ſuch requeſts, out

Note.

Rom. 12. 11.

of

of ends of our owne, as when a man deſires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himſelfe, and not to ſerve his Maſter, this is to aske the talent, not for his maſters uſe, but for his owne; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare ſuch prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You ſhall ſee the contrary practice in the Saints; when they were earneſt with the *Lord* for any thing, ſtill they expreſſe that to him, and ſay, LORD, we deſire not this for our ſelves, but for thy glory, that we may uſe it for ſome good purpoſe, &c. *David*, when he was earneſt for life, when he was in ſickneſſe, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth he uſe? *Lord*, ſayth hee, *Shalt thou have glory in the grave?* As if hee ſhould ſay, if thou give me life, I will give it thee againe, I will improve it, and huſband it to thy advantage, and not to mine owne. And ſo *Hanna*, when ſhe was earneſt for a ſonne, ſhe makes this promiſe to the *Lord*, that he ſhall be for him and his advantage, ſhe would dedicate him to his uſe, and conſecrate him to his ſervice. So *Iacob*, when hee was earneſt with the *Lord* to give him meat, drinke, and cloathes, &c. LORD, ſaith he, *If thou doe, I will give the tenth part to thee againe.* I ſay, when the heart is thus diſpoſed in our fervency, in our importunity, when wee aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conſcience tels us within, that if wee had it, wee would beſtow it upon the LORD, wee would not abuſe it, wee would not ſpend it on our luſts, it ſhould not bee to ſerve our ſelves, but to ſerve the LORD with-

What Arguments the Saints have uſed in their prayers.

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all, then our fervency is rightly ordered.

4. Condition required in prayer is humility. *Iames 4. 2 Chron. 7. 14.*

The next condition required, is *humility*; *as Iames 4. The Lord gives grace to the humble:* And *2 Chron. 7. 14. If my people humble themſelves, and call upon my Name, then will I heare in heaven, and grant their requeſts.* And throughout the Scripture, you ſee, that this is a condition that the *Lord* puts in every where; *Hee hath reſpect to the low eſtate, Iſay 66. 2.* ſaith the *Lord, All theſe things have my hands made*, looking upon all the creatures, the whole frame of them, they are all good, and I have reſpect unto them; but, ſaith he, I regard not all theſe in compariſon of an humble heart, *To him will I looke that is of an humble and contrite ſpirit:* when the *Lord* lookes upon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he looks for: for *he gives grace to the humble*; that is, to ſuch a man as is little in his owne eyes, and therefore fit to be exalted, fit to receive a mercy at *Gods* hands.

Iſay. 66. 2.

Reaſons why humility is required in prayer.

1 God exalts ſuch.

You know, it is a rule that the *Lord* keeps; for ſuch as are humble and low, ſuch he exalts; and thoſe that exalt themſelves he puls downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that parvity, that ſenſe of his owne unworthineſſe is a prevailing argument with him; and therefore *Gen. 32. Iacob* uſeth that Argument, when hee comes to put up his petition, to bee delivered from *Eſau: Lord, I am leſſe than all thy mercies:* that is, take any one of thy mercies, the leaſt, and put in one end of the balance, and put me in the other, and I am leſſe than it, and lighter than it, take all the

Gen. 32.

the worth that is in me, it is not heavie enough for the leaſt mercy. Now, when hee was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his owne eyes, the *Lord* beſtowed that mercy on him, hee was now fit to receive it. So *David*, when the *Lord* ſends him word by *Nathan*, that he would *build him a houſe for ever* (you ſee how hee expreſſed himſelfe) *Hee went into the houſe of the Lord, and ſate before him, and ſaid, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers houſe?* As if hee ſhould ſay, I was taken out of the duſt, I was one of the meaneſt men of *Iſrael*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou haſt had reſpect unto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people; but to build my Kingdome, and my houſe, to make me a conſtant houſe for ever. I ſay, this ſenſe of our owne unworthineſſe, makes us more fit to receive the mercy, to bee exalted by receiving ſuch a requeſt, as wee put up to the *Lord*; and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble. 2 Sam. 7. 18.

Moreover, *God gives grace to the humble*, that is, he ſhewes favour to them, when they come and aske any thing at his hands, becauſe an humble man will be ready to doe whatſoever hee will, it is an expreſſion of *David*, in *Acts* 13. 22. *Hee will doe whatſoever I will*: that may bee ſaid of every humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the *Lords* will, hee is ready to doe whatſoever hee knowes to bee his pleaſure, hee reſiſts him in nothing. Now, when a man will doe whatſoever *God* will, the *Lord* will be ready to doe whatſoever 2 God gives grace to ſuch. *Acts* 13. 22.

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ver hee will; he will be ready to ſay to him, as he did to the *Canaanite*, *Oh woman, bee it to thee as thou wilt.* When a man on the otherſide, reſiſts the LORD (as every proud man doth, ſaith the text) the *Lord* reſiſts him, the *Lord reſiſts the proud, and gives grace to the humble.* A reſiſting ſpirit cauſeth the *Lord* to reſiſt our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, becauſe he yeelds to the *Lord* in all things; and when a man yeelds to the *Lord* (take that for a rule) in obeying *Gods* Commandements, *God* will yeeld to us in granting our petitions.

Note.

3 It is an acceptable ſacrifice.

Beſides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable ſacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he ſmells a ſweet ſavour from ſuch a ſacrifice above all other; yea, it is that which ſets a high price upon every ſacrifice that wee offer; the beſt prayers, the beſt workes, that proceed not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Pſal.* 51. *Lord*, ſaith *David*, *if I offer ſacrifice, thou wilt not regard it*, but *the ſacrifice of a contrite, and humble ſpirit*, thoſe thou regardeſt, and thoſe ſacrifices that proceed from it. When we come to make a petition to the *Lord* (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a proud perſon comes empty-handed, but an humble perſon comes with a ſacrifice, and the beſt ſacrifice; becauſe he ſacrificeth himſelfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himſelfe of himſelfe, he opens a doore to the *Lord* to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; ſuch a ſacrifice

fice the *Lord* is well pleaſed with, and ſuch a ſacrifice ſpeakes for one, it makes a way for his requeſts, and therefore the *Lord* hearkens to it.

4 They receive all as of free grace.

Laſtly, the *Lord* is ready to heare thoſe that are humble, becauſe whatſoever they receive, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himſelfe, a man that is lift up in his owne opinion, thinkes it to be due, he thinkes there is ſome correſpondence between his workes, and the wages. You know what is ſaid of the *Phariſee*, that *the Publican went away juſtified rather than hee.* Why ſo? Becauſe the *Publican* thought himſelfe worthy of nothing. And therefore *Ezek.*36.31. when the LORD promiſeth thoſe great mercies to his people, he requires this condition of them, that they ſhould *acknowledge themſelves worthy to be deſtroyed.* When a man hath a ſenſe of his owne unworthineſſe, and ſo comes to the *Lord*, and askes it as of meere grace and mercy, that is a great motive to prevaile with him: for he is very carefull of that. You know in *Deut.* 8. 11. how wary the *Lord* was in giving this rule to them; *take heed when thou commeſt into that good Land, thinke not to ſay with thy ſelfe, the Lord hath done this, for my owne righteouſneſſe. No*, ſaith hee, *I have not done it for that, but for my Covenant which I made with Abraham, Iſaac and Iacob:* that is, for my owne name ſake, for my mercies ſake, for the covenant that I confirmed with them, that is, the covenant in Ieſus Chriſt, therefore I have done it, and not for your own righteouſnes. So then you ſee, that this

Luke 18.

Ezek. 36. 31.

Deut. 8. 11.

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this is a condition the *Lord* will have obſerved in our calling upon him, that our hearts be humbled, that a man be little, and vile in his own eies, that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is ſo diſpoſed, he *gives grace*, that is, he ſhewes favour, he is ready to grant our requeſts.

5. Condition required in prayer is, to ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts.

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee *ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts*. You know, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* drew neere unto him with a common fire (when they ſhould have brought ſuch fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the *Lord* deſtroyed them: and he gives this reaſon; *For I will be ſanctified in thoſe that draw neere to me*. When wee come to call upon the *Lord*, wee know, then wee come neere to him, and in ſuch drawing neere, wee muſt ſanctifie him in our hearts, that is, we muſt conceive him to be, as hee is, moſt holy. Now if the Lord be moſt holy, if he that is uncleane, and impure, and unholy, ſhall come neere him, he ſanctifies not the *Lord God*, (that is) he comes not to him as to a moſt holy *God*, but he lookes upon him, as if he were a common perſon. And therfore whenſoever they came to offer a ſacrifice, in the old Law, they were firſt purified; if any man were uncleane, and ſhould offer a ſacrifice, hee was to be cut off from his people. Therefore to ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. It is the charge that the Apoſtle gives there, *Lift up pure hands without wrath or doubting:*

1 Tim. 2. 8.

lift

liſt up your hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath or doubting.

But you wil ſay, what is this holineſſe?

Queſt.

Beloved, it is nothing but *a ſequeſtring, or ſeparating any thing from a common uſe, and appropriating it to God alone*; that is holineſſe. You know, whatſoever was holy to the *Lord*, in the Temple, or otherwiſe, whether it were holy veſſels, or holy men, as the Prieſts, it was ſeparated from all other uſes, and made peculiar to him, and to his ſervice. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things elſe, and peculiar to the *Lord* alone. As a chaſte wife is to her husband, whoſe affections are beſtowed upon him, and no other perſon elſe; ſo when the heart is to the *Lord* alone, when all the affections are intent upon him, and beſtowed upon him, and upon none elſe, this is to have the heart holy to him. So that now he that will have an eye upon credit, upon vaine-glory, upon wealth, upon his luſts, upon any thing beſides the *Lord*, whereto the heart is wedded, ſo that he beſtowes any part of that conjugal affection upon it, which ſhould be wholly the *Lords*, this man is an unholy man, his heart is not holy: for it is not ſequeſtred from other things, and conſecrated to him alone: for that only is to be holy.

Anſw.
Holines, what.

1
The heart muſt be holy.
Simile.

An unholy man, who.

And as the heart muſt bee holy, ſo muſt the prayer be holy. When a man prayes to the *Lord* with reſpect unto him, and hath an eye upon him, and nothing elſe comes in to take away part of this prayer; if by-reſpect, and worldly, and carnall

2
The prayer muſt be holy.

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carnall thoughts come in, and ſet you on work to pray, now theſe have a portion & intereſt in your prayers, they make your prayers profane and common, they are not peculiar to the *Lord*, they are unholy. So that is the holines then in ſeeking the LORD, when we are knit, and wedded to him, when one takes this reſolution to himſelfe, I am the LORDS ſervant, and him will I ſerve, I am not the ſervant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the LORD, and his will I be alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things elſe. So likewiſe when a man prayes, ſo that his ſoule is intent upon the *Lord*, and upon nothing beſides, when the whole ſtreame of his affections are carried to him, this is to ſeeke to him in holineſſe, this is to ſanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts.

Heb. 10. 2.

3 Particular ſins muſt be repented of.

And laſtly, if there be any conſcience of ſinne (that phraſe I find uſed in *Heb.* 10.) that is, if there be any evill conſcience, if a man be conſcious to himſelfe of any ſin that is unrepented of, ſuch a man cannot pray, that makes him unholy: if there be any ſinfull luſt yet living in him, that is unmortified in him, which is not waſhed away, ſuch a man is unholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themſelves, when they ſinne againſt *God*, as you heard heretofore, they are ſuſpended from the Covenant; though they be within the Covenant, yet they are ſuſpended from receiving the benefit by it, which otherwiſe they might have: till that ſinne be waſhed away, they are not holy. A Prieſt, or one that was holy; if he touched any uncleane thing, hee remained unholy

holy, till he was waſhed, though otherwiſe hee were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to *Gods* ſervice; ſo it may be with thoſe, that are within the Covenant; though thou bee a holy man, yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart be polluted with any ſinne, of one kinde or other, as long as that remaines, thou art unholy. If thou come now, and ſeeke to the *Lord*, you know what the judgement was in the old law, ſuch an one was to bee cut off from his people. And therefore, you ſhall finde, this was the conſtant practice of the Saints, when they ſought the *Lord*, for any ſpeciall mercy, they began with taking paines with their owne hearts, with humbling themſelves for their owne ſinnes, and the ſinnes of the people: as we know, *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, and *David*, did in their prayers; but I will not ſtand to inlarge my ſelfe therin, for it is well enough knowne to ſuch as are converſant in the Scriptures: onely let me exhort every man, when hee commeth with any requeſt and petition to the *Lord*, let him firſt examine his heart and life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, conſider and go through all the particulars; ſee if there bee any thing amiſſe, if there be any tincture of uncleanneſſe yet lying upon him, which is not yet waſhed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of fleſh, or ſpirit; and let him know, that it is but labour loſt, it is a provoking of the *Lord*, to come with unpreparedneſſe to draw neere to him, except he be cleanſed.

The practice of holy men in their prayers.

But you will ſay, How ſhall we be cleanſed? *Queſt.*

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Anſw. 2 Meanes of cleanſing a mans ſelfe. 1

I anſwer, you are cleanſed by renewing your repentance, and ſprinkling the blood of Chriſt: when a man humbles himſelfe for his ſinne, and entreth into a covenant with *God*, not to returne unto it, when he makes his heart perfect, and ſincere with the *Lord* in that particular.

2

And ſecondly, when he ſhall withall beleeve, that it is forgiven through Chriſt, when hee is ſprinkled with his blood to waſh it away: though thy ſinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art waſhed; as it is in 1 *Corinth.* 6. 9. *Now you are waſhed, now you are ſanctified, now you are juſtified:* therefore let no man bee diſcouraged in this caſe: for, I confeſſe, there is nothing that gives ſuch a check to our prayers, that gives ſo many ſtabs to them (as it were) that hinders us in that duty, as the conſciouſneſſe of ſinne, when a man remembers ſuch and ſuch a ſinne he hath committed, which doth much diſcourage him, if by the blood of Ieſus Chriſt they be not waſhed away. Though a mans face be very foule, yet you know, a baſon of cleere water will waſh it cleane, and all the filth is gone; now the blood of Chriſt is more effectuall to rinſe thy conſcience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away, both the guilt, and likewiſe the filth and ſtaine of ſin, than water is to clenſe thy face; and therefore if thou haſt any ſinne, labour to be waſhed from it, that ſo thou maiſt come to the *Lord*, having thy heart ſprinkled from an evill conſcience, and thy body waſhed in pure water, as it is *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw neere*, ſaith the Apoſtle,

1 *Cor.* 6. 9.

Cõſciouſneſſe of ſin a great hinderance in our prayers.

Simile.

Heb. 10. 20.

poſtle, *in aſſurance of faith*; (but how?) *having our hearts ſprinkled from an evill conſcience:* as if hee ſhould ſay, otherwiſe your drawing neere will be to no purpoſe, you ſhall but provoke the *Lord* in drawing neere, except you be thus ſprinkled, and thus waſhed, and thus purified.

Object.

I, but you will ſay to me, if this bee required, who ſhall be heard in his prayers? For who can ſay his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be required, that we muſt lift up holy and pure hearts, or elſe we ſhall not be accepted; what comfort ſhall wee have in calling upon the *Lord*, at any time?

Anſw. What it is to have a pure heart.

To this I anſwer, that to have a pure heart is not to be free from ſin, and from daily failings, (for ſo indeed none ſhould have a pure heart) but pureneſſe of heart, holineſſe of heart is, to have *our hearts ſprinkled from an evill conſcience, and to have our bodies waſhed with pure water*; (that is) to be purified before the *Lord* is nothing elſe, but to have ſuch an habituall diſpoſition, which makes a man ready to waſh himſelfe ſtill, though hee bee ſtill ſpotted with ſinne. So that this is the diſpoſition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the LORD with a pure heart, though hee bee ſtill ſpotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall diſpoſition, hee hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is ſtill working out that impurity, and waſhing it away; though ſtill he be oppoſed, and aſſaulted, and tempted, and ſomtimes foiled, yet ſtill he reſiſts it, and fights againſt it;

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as the *Iſraelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amalek:* ſuch a diſpoſition is in a holy man, hee never makes peace with any ſinne; though hee be led captive ſometimes by it, yet he yeelds not to that captivity. This is to have a pure hart; though his heart be defiled ſometimes as a veſſell will be foule, yet hee waſheth, and rinſeth his heart, he never ſuffers it to continue muddy, and uncleane, and in a filthy diſpoſition, but hee hath a fountaine, a ſpring of grace within, that will worke out all impurity, as a ſpring workes out mudde; he that thus purifies himſelfe ſtill, though the fountaine be muddy, though there bee many injections, many temptations, many luſts and ſinnes; yet if hee be purified himſelfe, that hee will ſuffer no ſinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to reſt there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye and continue there, ſuch a man hath a pure heart. We ſay, that is pure, that is full of it ſelfe, and will have no *heterogenea*, no other thing mingled with it, ſuch a thing is pure, as pure oyle is nothing elſe but oyle. Now hee that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath ſimply nothing elſe, that hath no ſinne mingled, that hath no droſſe mingled with his wine, but hee that ſuffers it not to reſt there; for as oyle and water, when you jumble them together (as you know) when they are ſhaken together, they mingle, yet the oyle workes out, and purifies it ſelfe, it will not ſuffer it ſelfe to abide with the water: ſo a man that is regenerate, a man that is *borne of God*, hath a ſeed remaining in him, though he do ſin,

A holy heart never makes peace with ſin.

Purity, what.

Simile.

ſin, yet, ſaith the Apoſtle, *he cannot ſinne*, that is, he doth not agree, he doth not mingle with that ſin, it hath no reſt in his heart, but he workes it out; in a paſſion when hee is ſhaken (as it were) when he is tranſported, when he is not himſelfe, there may bee a mixture, and the fountaine, and the ſpring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himſelfe, ſtill hee workes it out: and this it is to have a pure heart. So that a man, a man thus affected, may come with boldneſſe to the throne of grace, and not be diſcouraged; what though thy ſinnes be many, and very great, and often repeated? yet if thou find in thy ſelfe ſuch a diſpoſition of pureneſſe and holineſſe, ſtill to cleanſe thy ſelfe, though thou be ſtill polluted and defiled, I can aſſure thee, thy heart is pure, thou maiſt go with confidence to the Throne of grace.

But now you will ſay this to me (for that may be objected) why? but may not any carnall man ſay as much, he ſins againſt GOD, and comes and askes mercy, he comes and cryes for forgiveneſſe and ſaith he will ſinne no more, and yet he ſinnes again the next day, and *addes drunkenneſſe to thirſt*, that is, his ſinne and his repentance they run in a circle, as drunkenneſſe and thirſt? how ſhall we then diſtinguiſh betweene theſe two? that purifying diſpoſition in the Saints, and thoſe vaniſhing purpoſes that carnall men may have, who notwithſtanding never had experience of the worke of grace, of that purity of heart that wee ſpeake of? *Object.*

To this I anſwer briefly, you ſhall know the *Anſw.*

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Difference betweene the godly and others in falling into ſinne.

difference by this, a godly man, when he falls into ſinne, and is defiled with it, hee waſheth himſelfe from day to day; you ſhall find alwaies this, that he gets ground of the ſin, of the luſt which manifeſts it ſelfe in any actuall tranſgreſſion, ſtill it loſeth by it, it gathers not ſtrength, but loſeth ſtrength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his ſinne ſtill encreaſeth, and intends the habit, and the luſt growes ſtronger and ſtronger, it gets ground of him, and thoſe good things that hee hath, they are more and more worne out, and ſo they grow worſe and worſe from day to day: and that is the property of an evill man, of unregeneracy whereſoever, it is apt to grow worſe and worſe, and the more falls they have, the more ſinne gets ground, and the more they loſe; but it is not ſo with an holy man, the more he falls, the more ſtrength he gathers, he is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull over his wayes, hee is the more emptied of himſelfe, and drawes neerer to the LORD, and is the more inflamed with love of him, yea he is ſtrengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every graee; ſo that here the rule now holds not true, that *Acts increaſe habits*; but the contrary, *Acts leſſen the habits*, which is a Paradox in Philoſophy, but here it is ſo.

Sinne in a carnal man groweth ſtronger, in a godly man weaker.

Acts leſſen the habits.

Queſt. If you aske how this can be?

Anſw. I anſwer, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to paſſe *by accident*, as wee ſay, becauſe the grace in him is ſtirred up, by

How ſin in a godly man is weakned by his fall.

thoſe

thoſe foiles, and ſlips, thoſe fals and infirmities, to which he is ſubject; I ſay, grace is ſtirred up in him more and more, and he receives more vigour and ſtrength thereby. As we ſay of true valour, it is increaſed more by oppoſition; ſo it comes to paſſe, that the more the child of *God* falls into ſinne, the more grace is intended, Satan gets leſſe ground; as *Hezekiah*, when hee fell into pride, the pride of his heart was leſſened more by it after the act, than it was at that time when he ſhewed his treaſure to the Ambaſſador of the king of *Babel*, he knew not before the pride of his heart; that ſinne, that fall, did manifeſt his corruption, which he did not ſee before: for when the heart is ſincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is ſet more on worke to reſiſt ſinne. So *David*, when hee had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the LORD ſhewed him more mercy afterwards, than ever hee did before, hee ſhewed him where the Temple ſhould be built, and uſed him in that worke, whereas hee never ſhewed him ſuch mercy, and kindneſſe before: (I cannot ſtand to expreſſe particulars) ſo it is with all *Gods* Children; their hearts are never better, nor in a more holy temper, in a more gracious diſpoſition feareful to offend, than after their fals. And therefore conſider this, that thou be not deceived; but maiſt diſtinguiſh betweene this falling into ſinne, and waſhing your ſelves, and that relapſe to which evill men are ſubject; keep that for a rule, that wherſoever there is true

Valour increaſed by oppoſition.

The heart of the Godly beſt after.

Note.

Simile.

Vertue gets ſtrength by wounds.

Simile.

grace, ſtill it ſtirres it ſelfe more and more, as it finds more reſiſtance, even as the wind and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water when it finds a ſtop, it growes more violent, and ſo alſo the wind; of the ſame nature is grace, where it finds a ſtop, or reſiſtance, it growes more ſtrong, and intent. The heathen had a little glimpſe of this truth, when they ſaid of vertue that it growes more freſh and vigorous by being wounded; it is true of grace and holineſſe, the trueſt vertue, the more it is oppoſed, the more it growes: even as you ſee in oppoſition in the diſputes of Scholars, and all kind of contentions in law, or any thing elſe, the ſtronger the objection is, where there is ability in the party, it produceth new motions, and new anſwers, and puts them more to it, ſo theſe aſſaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holineſſe to *God*, and more ſtrength, it multiplies the grace of *God* within: ſo that the graces receive increaſe, and the more they are exerciſed, and intended, ſinnefull luſts decreaſe, the mind is more emptied forth, the chaffe that is in us, and the droſſe is more winnowed out, & the heart is more cleanſed from it. So much ſhall ſerve for this, that whoſoever will come to the *Lord* in prayer, muſt ſanctifie him in his heart, that is, he muſt come with a holy and with a pure heart. Wherewithall we have ſhewed what this holineſſe and pureneſſe is, wherein it conſiſts, and likewiſe how the objection is anſwered, that might deceive us.

I muſt adde another, you ſhall finde in *Phil.* 4. 6. whenſoever you come to make your requeſts to the *Lord*, this is another condition that he requires, to bee *thankfull* for the mercies you have received already: *In all things*, ſaith hee, *let your requeſts bee made knowne to the Lord, with thankſgiving:* as if hee ſhould ſay, Take heed of this, that whenſoever you come to put up any petition to the *Lord*, you forget not the duty of thankfulneſſe, but ſtill when you come to aske any thing that you want, remember that you give thankes for that you have. Beloved, this condition muſt not be omitted; you ſee the *Lord* himſelfe puts it in very carefully. *Let your requeſts bee made knowne with Prayer, and ſupplication, and with thankſgiving.* There is much reaſon why our petitions and requeſts ſhould bee accompanied with thankſgiving to the *Lord:* for is it not reaſon when you come to aske ſomewhat for your ſelves, that you ſhould doe that alſo that is acceptable to *God?* will a man ſerve himſelfe altogether to come meerely to aske the thing hee wants? This a man may doe out of love to himſelfe, out of reſpect to himſelfe, but you muſt remember to doe ſomething that is pleaſing and acceptable to the *Lord.* And therefore you ſhall finde in the old Law, whenſoever they had any ſpeciall requeſt to the *Lord*, they were commanded ſtill to come with *peace Offerings*, that is, Offerings, wherein they expreſſed thankfulnes, you ſhall find this cuſtome ſet down in *Levit.* & other places, that ſuch a man as came to requeſt any thing,

6. Condition required in prayer, is Thankfulnes. *Phil.* 4. 6.

Note.

thing at the *Lords* hands, might not come *empty-handed:* and what ſhould he bring with him? a peace offering: what was that? thankefulneſſe for that peace he had inioyed, that was a peace offering. For *peace* is a generall word, comprehending all kinde of mercies, for what is our health, but the peace of our humours within? what is our cheerefulneſſe and ioy, but the peace of conſcience within? all the comfort we have in our name and ſtate, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I ſay, whenſoever thou commeſt with a petition, forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thankſgiving to the *Lord*, for that which thou haſt receiued; doe ſomwhat that is acceptable to him as well as ſeeke for that which is uſefull for thy ſelfe. Beloved, there is much reaſon for it; becauſe, if a man be poring on his wants ſtill, if it be in his mind when he comes to call upon *God*, it will indiſpoſe him for ſpirituall performance, it will beget murmuring, and ſowreneſſe, & diſcontent, it will imbitter his ſpirit; but when as a man remembers many mercies that he hath receiued, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it ſweetens his ſpirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts thoſe graces that are in him, it drawes him neerer to the *Lord*, it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition that he is in: whereas, on the other ſide, forgetfulneſſe of mercies, when a man is onely intent upon his petition to haue the thing done, hee breakes many times into that ſullenneſſe of diſpo-

All mercies reduced to peace.

If wee looke onely on our wants, we cannot be thankfull.

diſpoſition, that we find in children, that when they cannot have all that they would, they throw away that which they have; in like manner it is our fault many times, when we come and ſeeke to the *Lord* for any thing that we have need of, we are ſo intent upon it, that we forget al the mercies we have received, as if they were nothing: the *Lord* would not have it ſo, but will have us remember what wee receive, that wee may bee content to want, that our hearts may bee brought to patience and contentment, under the croſſe, and to want what it ſhall pleaſe him for a time to deny us: as *Iob* reaſoneth, ſaith he, *I have received good from the Lords hands* (it is his anſwer to his wife) *and ſhall I not receive ill?* So, if a good man bee thankfull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe ſo, it will make him content with that preſent want: for hee lookes to that which hee hath had in hand. When a man ſaith thus with himſelfe, thus, and thus much good I have received at the *Lords* hands; what though I want ſuch a thing? what though I be preſt with ſuch an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it: I ſay, the *Lord* lookes for this; expoſtulating with him and murmuring againſt him, is not acceptable to him, but a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, when a man ſo askes, that withall hee is content to be denied, if his good pleaſure be ſo, this he accepts. Now, thankfulnes for mercy, makes us ready to be ſo affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to reſigne our ſelves to the *Lord*, and therefore hee will have thanke-

Simile.

The ſight of ſome good received will make us content to want.

thankefulneſſe to goe with it, whenſoever wee come to aske any thing at his hands. Looke to it then, that whenſoever you come to ſeeke the *Lord*, you be thankfull for the mercies you have had, remember them, for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requeſts. Thankfulneſſe is (as it were) the incenſe that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the *Lord*, ſo much the ſooner: Prayer goes up without incenſe, when we offer up our petitions without thankefulneſſe, becauſe that is a ſacrifice, as you know it is called the *calves of our lips*, and ever when you joyne thankfulneſſe, with your petitions, it is like a ſacrifice mingled with it, that helpes to prevaile with you.

7. Condition required in prayer, is, to come in the Name of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt.

The next condition is, and it muſt not be forgotten of all the reſt, that we come to the *Lord*, *in the name of Ieſus Chriſt*. This is a thing commonly knowne, you will ſay, who knowes not that except wee come in the name of *Chriſt*, no petition can be acceptable? Beloved, I ſay to you in that caſe, as the Apoſtle *Iames* ſpeakes, *Iam.* 4. where he gives this rule, that we ſhould ſay, *If the Lord will, we will doe ſuch and ſuch a thing to morrow, &c.* And when the anſwere would bee ready, Who knowes not this, ſaith hee, *If you know the will of the* LORD, *and doe it not, your judgement ſhall bee greater*; ſo I ſay, if any doe not practice this (and it is a thing we are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a cuſtomary manner, but to doe it in good earneſt, as wee ought to doe it, therein

Iames 4.

therein commonly wee come ſhort) you know how great a ſinne it was, in the old law, to offer without a Prieſt; in the 17. of *Leviticus* it is ſaid, if any man brought his Sacrifice, though it were the beſt Sacrifice and the choiceſt, yet, ſaith the Text, *If hee did not bring it to the Prieſt, and to the Altar, but ſlay his Sacrifice elſe-where, without a Prieſt, ſuch a man was guilty of blood, and was to bee cut off from his people:* that is, hee was to bee cut off by the Prieſt, by excommunication, and after by the civill Magiſtrate. You know, it was *Vzziahs* fault to offer incenſe, when it was proper to the Prieſt onely to doe it. The ſame ſinne wee commit when wee come to the *Lord*, and thinke, becauſe wee have repented, and prayed fervently a little while, and our hearts and ſpirits are in a good diſpoſition, and becauſe wee know no ſinne of which wee are conſcious, therefore wee conclude that wee ſhall be heard. It is true, the *Lord* requires theſe qualifications in the party, when hee prayes; but take heed of thinking to bee heard for this, this is to offer without a Prieſt. You muſt come thus to the LORD, and ſay thus unto him, LORD, I confeſſe (notwithſtanding all this) I am unworthy, I have nothing in me, why thou ſhouldeſt regard mee, it cannot bee, that either I, or my prayer ſhould be acceptable, but I beſeech thee, take them at the hands of CHRIST our *High Prieſt*, hee that is *entred into the vaile*, he that takes the *Prayers of the Saints, and mingles them with ſweet odours*; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

How we ought to come to God.

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doe this, with dependance upon Chriſt, and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a ſacrifice to him. This wee muſt carefully remember, and therefore wee ſee an excellent expreſſion of it in *Levit.* 5. where this is made cleere to you, that it is not any excellency in the perſon, nor any fervency in the prayer, nor any puteneſſe, or holineſſe that is found in him, nothing that comes from man, that cauſeth his prayer to bee acceptable, but it is the Prieſt: See the place from *verſ.* 8. to the 11. You ſhall finde there the law was, that he that came to ſacrifice, *muſt bring a ſheepe, or a ſhee Goat*; but if he were not ſo rich as to doe ſo, he was able enough to bring *two Turtle Doves*, yet if he were not able to doe that, then ſaith the Text, *He ſhall bring the tenth part of an Epha of fine floure* (a very ſmall thing) and then it is ſaid, *Let him give it to the Prieſt, and hee ſhall make an atonement for him, and his ſinne ſhall bee forgiven.* Whence I obſerve this, that it is not the goodneſſe of the ſacrifice, the price, nor the choiſneſſe, nor the excellency of that, though it were a thouſand Rammes, and ſo many Sheepe, and Bullocks (as you reade of many great ſacrifices that were offered by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an Epha of fine Floure, which was exceeding little, this prevailed full as much: whence it is evident, that it is not in the excellency of the ſacrifice, but the pooreſt, and the ſmalleſt, and the meaneſt ſacrifice will prevaile with *God*, as well as the richeſt, and the greateſt. What is the reaſon? The text ſaith, It is the *Prieſt* that muſt offer

Levit. 5.

Our prayers are not heard for any excellency in them, but for Chriſt.

it, he makes it acceptable. So in this caſe, let the ſacrifice be never ſo meane, yet if it bee Chriſt that offers the ſacrifice, if it be commended to the Prieſt, and he offers it, the *Lord* will accept it. You ſhall find that rule, *Lev.* 5. 11. *He that brings a ſacrifice* (this caution was given) *hee muſt put no incenſe to it, neither oyle.* But ſhould the ſacrifice be offered without incenſe? No, you ſhall find in *Levit.* 16. that alwayes, *the Prieſt* when he entred into the *Holy of Holieſt*, hee *burnt incenſe, that the cloud of that incenſe might cover the Mercy-ſeate:* the meaning is this, that when any man comes to offer a prayer to the *Lord*, he can put no incenſe to it, the Prieſt only he muſt put in incenſe, that is IESVS CHRIST onely muſt offer the ſacrifice, wherein the *Lord* ſmells a ſavour of reſt: for the *Lord* expreſſeth himſelfe in this manner, as if he were diſquieted for ſin, and can take no reſt; now, when *Ieſus Chriſt* offers a ſacrifice, he ſmells a ſavour of reſt; becauſe it comes from him, in whom hee is well pleaſed: ſo I ſay, wee muſt be carefull, that we remember we come in the name of *Chriſt*.

Levit. 5. 11.

Levit. 16. 11. Chriſt muſt put incenſe to our prayers.

But, you will ſay, every man doth ſo, and how ſhall we know it?

Object.

You ſhall know it by this, if you have boldneſſe and confidence, that is an argument that you looke not upon your ſelves, but upon *Chriſt*. When a man is ſo exceeding timerous, and doubting, and fearefull, that he dares not come to the Throne of grace, or, if hee doe, yet hee makes a great queſtion, whether he ſhalbe heard or

Anſw. How to know when we come in our owne names in prayer.

Preston, J.

What required in the heart that comes to God in Chriſts Name.

or no, this is too much looking to himſelfe, here, the High Prieſt is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carry thee out, it will breed boldneſſe in thee, it will breed confidence: if thou come in the name of Chriſt, and offer up thy prayers through him, it will cauſe thee, in every petition thou putteſt up, to thinke thy ſelfe ſo much beholding to Chriſt, that thou wilt be ready to ſay in thy heart, whenſoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke Ieſus Chriſt for this. When a man, I ſay, ſhall be ſo much put upon his ſcore, it will make him ſo much indebted to the Lord Ieſus for his ſin that is remitted, and his petition that he hath granted, as that his heart ſhall bee more inlarged to thankfulneſſe, when hee is able to conſider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to ſay with himſelfe, If Ieſus Chriſt had not dyed, if I had not had ſuch an high Prieſt, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb. 9. To make interceſſion for mee*, I had loſt this benefit, I had never come to have put up a prayer to the *Lord*, or if I had, it ſhould not have been heard.

Heb. 9.

Obiect.

But you will ſay to mee, if wee bee heard for Chriſt; then though a man be ſinfull, and though he have none of the precedent conditions, though he have not that holineſſe that is required, if the Prieſt make him acceptable, why may hee not hope as well as the moſt holy man?

Anſw. Two things required in our ſacrifice.

I anſwer, briefly, though the Prieſt give all acceptance to the ſacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there are

are two things besides required, 1. That the person that brings the sacrifice, be cleane; no impure person was to bring a sacrifice: 2. That the sacrifice bee without blemish; he that hath a male, and brings a female, is cursed: so then this is required, that the person be righteous, and that the prayer be fervent, such as is indited by the helpe of *Gods* Spirit, that it may be a sacrifice fit for the LORD. But now, what we have from CHRIST is this, that though the person, and the prayer be thus qualified, and have those forenoted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable without the Priest. And therefore this should encourage you when you consider the glorious GOD, his holinesse, that great distance betweene him and you; and your selves, on the other side, how vile and sinfull you are, and unfit to come & put up your requests to him, now, when you thinke of a Mediator, of an high Priest, who is entred into heaven, who is gone thither, and sits at the right hand of Majesty, making intercession for you, when you consider there is one high Priest who is able to prevaile, not like the Priests in the Law, but one that is over the house of *God*, one that is his very Son, who is not entred in through the blood of Bulls and Goats, but with his owne blood; when out of this you shal receive confidence, and come neere him with boldnesse, this is to make use of *Christ*, and to offer sacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you have considered all the conditions mentioned, & fitted your prayers according to them, that you

The person must be holy, and the prayer fervent.

How to make use of Christ as our Priest.

be confident, and expect much, that when you have prayed, you may ſay thus; *Lord*, I expect now the granting of them, thou canſt not now denie them, *Lord*, I will wait now. And this is our fault, when we have prayed, and the thing comes not preſently, we are ready to give over, wee are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing ſpecially to bee remembred, wee muſt ſo farre magnifie our prayers, wee muſt ſet a price upon them ſo farre, and ſo eſteeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they wil bring the thing to paſſe. If a man take a drugge, or a medicine, or an herbe, and uſe it to a wound, or a diſeaſe, once or twice, or thrice, and if hee ſee it doth no good, he will lay it aſide, and take another medicine: for, ſaith he, I have tryed it, and it will doe me no good; ſo a man doth with his prayers, hee ſaith, I have ſought to the LORD, I have prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted me; and therefore he is ready to lay it aſide, as if it were not effectuall, and to take another meanes: this neglect of prayer is, not to know the force of the medicine. You muſt know therefore of what efficacy prayer is; and truſt it, and not give over (for it is effectuall to bring the thing to paſſe) and make not haſte, but ſtay, and wait. It was *Sarahs* fault, when *Abraham* and ſhee ſought to the *Lord* for a ſonne, ſhe made too much haſte to give *Hagar* to *Abraham*, when as they ſhould have ſtayed till the LORD had done it his owne way. So *Rebekkah*, there was a promiſe, and no doubt *Iacob* and ſhee prayed for the fulfilling of that

Waiting in prayer required.

Simile.

Inſtances of being overhaſty after prayer.

that promiſe; but ſhe made too much haſte, ſhe tooke a wrong way to get the bleſſing by lying; this was not waiting, but a ſtepping out to another meanes; becauſe they thought prayer and dependance upon *God* would not doe it. So *Saul* would not wait upon GOD, but hee would offer ſacrifice, this was to make haſte. And ſo it is, when a man is diſcouraged; *David*, when the thing was not preſently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a deſperate complaint, ſaying, *One day I ſhall fall by the hands of Saul.* Take heed of this, and when wee offer up our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to truſt them, and to depend, and wait upon *God*; ſay, certainly I ſhall not be denyed, the thing ſhall ſurely be granted. 1 Sam. 27. 1.

(***)

FINIS.

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